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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 46,662

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Blair: I am not dumping ideals

Labour leader answers critics

Michael White Political Editor

TONY BLAIR was fighting on two fronts last night to debunk John Major's startling claim that lower taxes are a moral issue while

simultaneously reassuring his own party activists that New Labour is not "dumping" socialist ideals. In an article in today's Guardian, the Labour leader rejects any suggestion that he is a closet Liberal Democrat or that he regards his party as a "failure". But he remains adamant about the need for

centre-left parties around the world to change in response to electoral defeat. In a separate initiative, he also ridiculed what Mr Major sees as the morality of tax-cutting for its own sake. Mr Blair told Radio 4's World at One that a truly moral government would see its purpose as providing good health and education, and tackling unemployment and homelessness.

How best to achieve such aims will be central to the election battle. But after last week's bruising exchanges at the TUC conference, Mr Blair still feels the need to bolster

core support as well as continue his appeal to floating voters. Denying that he has "dumped" Scottish devolution or is "bashing" the unions, Mr Blair insists in his article that necessary changes do not mean that Labour now stands for nothing. "The difficulty is making the argument without distortion. In particular, we should exorcise the language of betrayal", and debate without rancour, he writes.

"In making these changes, we are not ending the socialist ideal. On the contrary, we are giving it new life for

today. My kind of socialism is a set of values, based around notions of social justice. It remains. "Socialism as a rigid form of economic determinism has ended," but New Labour remains "within the traditions of social democracy and democratic socialism" Mr Blair writes - days after fellow-modernisers in Labour's ranks urged the ditching of the socialist label.

As senior Tories eagerly monitored signs of Labour division, John Prescott intervened in the debate to reassure traditionalists that even the rewritten version of

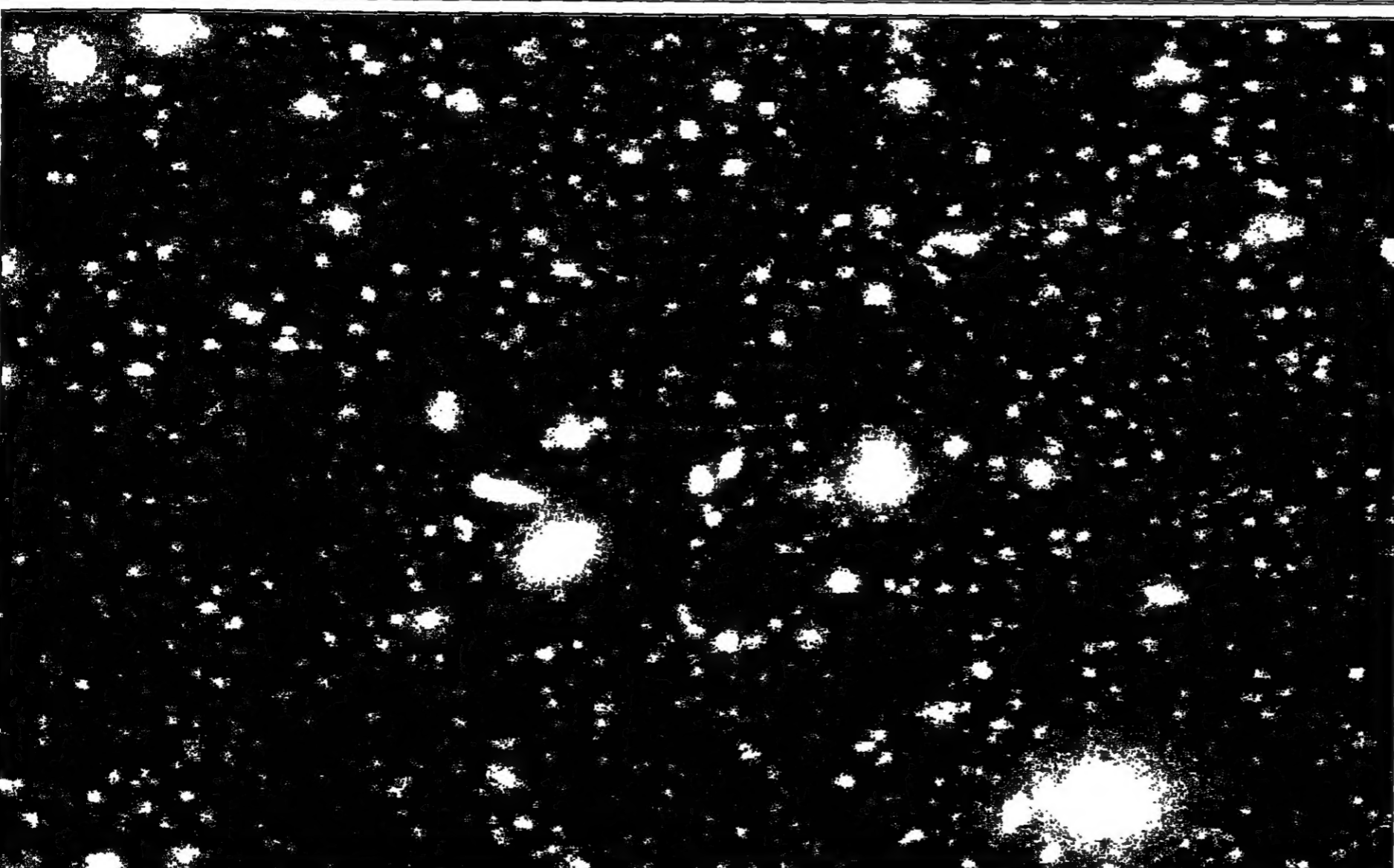
Labour's Clause 4 still asserts it is "a democratic socialist party". Mr Blair's deputy pointedly reminded a Road to the Manifesto rally in Luton that the crucial words "were agreed by Tony and myself to ensure we are relevant right into the next century" and went on to take a gentle swipe against too much Lib-Lab co-operation. He mentioned the word "socialist" four times.

Mr Prescott said the NHS had been conceived by the Liberal academic, Lord Beveridge, as an insurance-based system, and turned into one paid for out of taxes by the

Attlee government. "It was a Labour government which took this Liberal idea and transformed it into a democratic socialist concept," he said. In a keynote lecture in London yesterday the Prime Minister accused Blaire Labour of having more in common with the statist regimes of communist eastern Europe. Claiming that "the case for smaller government is as much a moral case as an economic one", Mr Major again pledged the Tories to cut income tax when they can. Amid scorn from Liberal Democrats as well as Labour,

he said his aim is to get public spending below 40 per cent of gross national product - scarcely lower than in 1979, critics quickly pointed out. "Smaller government fits with a belief in individual freedom and choice - still one of the basic divides in British politics," he said. Government should not "interfere and meddle where it is not needed", he insisted. It should be an "enabler", he said. In terms some Labour strategists would recognise.

Major attacks 'big government', page 3; Blair on socialism, page 9



A view of deep space from the William Herschel telescope showing young galaxies in the process of formation billions of years ago

Space, the final frontier, as seen down 10-billion-year time tunnel to birth of galaxies

Tim Radford finds truth of matter is out there

BRITISH astronomers using three telescopes as a kind of time machine have witnessed the birth of the first galaxies 10 billion years ago - and set a puzzle for those trying to calculate the birth of time itself. Dr Tom Shanks, of the Durham Cosmology Group, reports in Nature today that the detection of the oldest, faintest galaxies could once again force astronomers to think again about the moment of creation.

Not only do the latest findings raise questions about when the universe - all the

stars, all the light, all space and all time - began, they also raise questions about how it will all end. Dr Shanks said yesterday: "I think we have seen the final frontier."

His group, based at the University of Durham, combined data from the Hubble telescope, orbiting above the Earth's atmosphere, the William Herschel telescope run by Britain, the Netherlands and Spain in the Canary Islands and the UK's infra-red telescope on Hawaii. Using exposures of 120, 50 and 30 hours respectively, astronomers focused

on a tiny part of the sky and caught the faintest wisps of light from the most distant galaxies. In effect, they looked down a long tunnel of time back to a moment when the universe was perhaps a third or even fifth of its present age.

The galaxies they detected are blue, which is taken to mean that they are very newly-formed. But the light from them is also "redshifted" - which means they are accelerating away very swiftly.

This, to astronomers, means they are very far away. The universe began,

according to theory, with a Big Bang and galaxies have been expanding away from each other ever since. But if the galaxies are very far away, then they are also very far back in time.

"In the same way that light takes eight minutes to get from the Sun to the Earth, the light from these galaxies has taken 10 billion years to get to the Earth," said Dr Shanks.

According to at least one set of theories, this is too early for star formation. But, Dr Shanks said, cosmology had been a theoretical



Consumers spark boom

Larry Elliott Economics Editor

BRITAIN'S high streets are enjoying their biggest boom since the late 1980s, rekindling government hopes that public optimism about the economy will provide the foundation stone for political recovery before the election. Official figures released yesterday showed that a combination of low interest rates, dormant inflation and the revival in the housing market wooed consumers back into the shops last month.

Data from the Office for National Statistics showed that retail sales surged by 1 per cent in August, the strongest sign yet that the "iceberg" factor may at last be returning. The Treasury played down the importance of the August figures, but the City said the strength of consumer activity sharply reduced the chances of further cuts in interest rates for the foreseeable future.

Activity was 4.4 per cent higher in August than in the same month a year ago - the fastest rate of growth since the spring of 1989, when the economy was starting to slow

down under the weight of double-digit interest rates. Last month's rise followed a fall of 0.6 per cent in July, but the City said the underlying rise in consumer spending was no longer in any doubt.

In the three months to August - the Government's preferred measure and a better guide to the underlying trend - the volume of sales was up by 3.5 per cent on a year earlier.

Hefty prices discounting meant stores selling clothes and shoes had their best three-month trading period for 10 years, with the volume of sales up by more than 8 per cent on the June to August period of 1995.

Sales of household goods, which languished during the seven-year house-price slump, were almost 7 per cent higher in the latest quarter than a year earlier.

Liberal Democrat Treasury spokesman Malcolm Bruce said: "It looks sadly as if Mr Clarke's economic policy now consists of inflation engineering instead of securing the long-term investment the economy desperately needs."

Spending soars, page 3; Notebook, page 11

Nursery vouchers a nightmare, say Tory councils

Rebecca Smithers Political Correspondent

THE future of John Major's nursery voucher scheme was thrown into doubt last night after Tory-controlled Westminster council warned that the pilot it is running is fraught with problems and a bureaucratic nightmare for teachers.

In a leaked submission to the all-party education committee, the council has questioned Mr Major's promise

that the scheme will widen choice and improve the quality of education. It claims that "market forces on their own will not address shortage of places" and that "the likelihood of a voucher scheme stimulating the market to create new places is doubtful".

It also warns that the £1,100 vouchers do not even cover the cost of a part-time nursery place and that the number of places could fall. "These difficulties need to be addressed by the Government," it says.

The assessment is detailed by Deirdre McGrath, Westminster's director of education and leisure, in a submission to MPs investigating the operation of the nursery voucher scheme. The five-page document - leaked to the Labour MP Margaret Hodge - was sent to the committee after being approved by the council's education chair, Jenny Bianco.

The report provides the first evidence of the workings of the scheme, which four local authorities have been

running as a pilot since April in preparation for national implementation next April.

The Government claims the scheme will boost the number of pre-school places and give greater choice to the parents of four-year olds, who will get vouchers worth £1,100 to use in the state, voluntary or private sectors.

But Westminster's findings will embarrass the Tories ahead of their party conference next month where the Education Secretary, Gillian Shephard, was planning to

make the scheme a centrepiece of her speech.

In a further blow, the two other Tory-controlled councils - Wandsworth and Kensington & Chelsea - are understood to have expressed similar fears.

The councils' evidence raises serious doubts about the viability of the scheme, which Mr Major announced in 1994 as a key plank of educational reforms. It has been fraught with problems, and even Mrs Shephard's has had reservations.

Last night Mrs Hodge said: "Westminster, the jewel in the Tories' local government crown, has now joined the Labour Party in giving a resounding thumbs down to nursery vouchers. The report... lists a catalogue of disasters." She has written to Mrs Shephard urging her to scrap the scheme. "She should use the money to invest in real nursery education," Mrs Hodge added. "That is what parents want. That's even what Westminster Council wants."

Inside

Britain Children's home staff in Brent, north London, have taken strike action because they want a disturbed girl, aged 15, removed. 4

World News A damaging dispute with racial overtones is raging about who should become the next chief justice in South Africa. 7

Finance Up to 1,000 jobs are to go at Ford's Halewood car plant on Merseyside, the price of heavy investment on the new Escort model. 12

Sport The Rugby Football Union and its top clubs are involved in a new dispute, throwing into doubt autumn's Twickenham internationals. 16

Comment and Letters 8; Obituaries 10; G2; Crossword 15; Weather 16; Radio 16; TV 16



Advertisement for The Open University, featuring the text 'FRENCH OR GERMAN' and 'DIPLOMA IN FRENCH OR GERMAN'. It includes details about the courses, contact information, and a coupon to request more information.

2 NEWS

Sketch

Interesting people in a perfect past



Stuart Millar

ON the first floor of the trendy... Stuart Millar... philately will take you anywhere...

MISSING: Lee Boxell

EIGHT years ago, Lee, from Sutton, Surrey, told a friend with whom he had been window-shopping...



MISSING: Ruth Wilson

RUTH Wilson, aged 16, whose family live near Dorking, Surrey, was last seen in November...



MISSING: Stephen Bingham

STEPHEN was 15 when he went missing in June 1983. He left a note at his home in Sheffield...



Search for 'lost' children

Britain 'might block action'

Stephen Bates in Strasbourg

THE European Union last night moved to combat child abuse and paedophilia when it outlined measures to co-ordinate laws and police investigations...



Europe's missing children

STATISTICS on missing children are notoriously incomplete and unreliable... Interpol currently lists only 60 missing children in Europe...

Review

Ritualistic style unlocks emotion

Michael Billington

The Oedipus Plays

Olivier Theatre

It may not be Epidauros. There may not be the magic of the night sky or the rustle of the distant wind...

sense, Oedipus is the victim of fate. But Sophocles also shows that Oedipus has a restless curiosity and heroic dedication to truth...

MISSING: Mark Johnson

MARK, from Bristol, disappeared four years ago, when he was 16, leaving a note to say he was going to stay with a friend...

There were repeated calls in all our member states and we will begin to tackle the problem only when we come to terms with that reality...

Swiss gold inquiry delay

Holocaust survivors must wait two years for Nazi loot verdict

Richard Norton-Taylor

SURVIVORS of the Holocaust and their relatives will have to wait at least two years before they know whether they can recover billions of pounds worth of looted Nazi gold...

Friends and family think he may have joined a group of travellers.

The National Missing Persons Hotline is on 0500 700 700

from MEPs for the nascent European international police intelligence unit which Britain has blocked for two years...

Space, the final frontier revealed

This gold - worth about \$40 million - is under the control of the Tripartite Gold Commission which has already allocated it to 10 European governments with claims on it...

GARY LINEKER THINKS RUGBY'S LUCKY. IT'S ONLY GOT 57 OLD FARTS. You've read Gary Lineker's views about... RadioTimes

Shephard sets stricter teacher training rules

Donald MacLeod Education Correspondent

ACRACKDOWN on "trendy" teaching methods was signalled by Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary...

and university education departments blamed by many Conservatives for promoting ineffective child-centred methods in the classroom...

مكزيان التصيل

The Guardian
SSING:
children
ope's missing children

KEN'S MAJOR MIRACLE

Clarke's boom bursts Tory gloom



The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, has had an exceptional week, although he refrained from commenting on the evidence of consumer recovery

Sales figures hailed by City as evidence of a return to the late 1980s

Larry Elliott
Economics Editor

THE Conservatives seized gleefully on the upbeat news from Britain's high streets yesterday in a bid to dominate the political agenda ahead of the party conference season.

Although the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, refrained from commenting on the evidence of consumer recovery, party spin doctors joined the City in hailing the figures as evidence of a return to the late 1980s.

With sales of clothes and shoes 12.3 per cent higher in August than a year earlier, and activity in stores selling fridges, TVs, stereos, CD's, washing machines and microwaves, the City view was unanimous: if this is not a consumer boom, it is starting to look suspiciously like one.

What's more, analysts said, the prospects for the economy were as promising as ministers could wish for in the months leading up to the election. The public finances may be in a mess, but almost every other indicator was flashing green, they added.

Yesterday's data showed the strength of sales of household goods was directly linked to the recovery in the housing market, after its steady fall from 1989 to 1995. The Halifax building society said the cost of property was falling by around two per cent this time last year; now it is rising by more than five per cent.

House prices, which were crucial in lifting the spirits of consumers in the late 1980s, are proving influential again. Not since the Lawson boom in 1987/8 has business been so good for Dixons and Next. Consumers may say they still feel miserable, but their willingness to borrow, buy and, in some cases, binge suggests otherwise.

Andrew Cates, economist at City firm UBS, said yesterday that in more normal times (ie when an election was not looming) the Chancellor

would already have raised base rates to damp down spending. But the prospects of that are remote.

Eddie George, the Governor of the Bank of England, would love to see the cost of borrowing go up. But that is not going to happen. The minutes of the August monetary meeting between Mr George and Mr Clarke show the Chancellor will only be inclined to raise rates if "inflation pressures started to pick up".

But Mr Clarke is confident that inflation is unlikely to pick up before polling day. The last 12 months has seen a pause in economic growth, with output rising at a modest 1.8 per cent in the year to the second quarter of 1996.

Manufacturers have been left with warehouses full of unsold stocks, forcing them to cut prices in an attempt to drum up trade. Retailers are worried that the consumer boom may peter out if they get too greedy; earnings growth is being held in check by residual job insecurity.

As a result core producer prices — the cost of goods leaving factories — are growing more slowly than they have been since the 1960s, while the annual rate of consumer inflation is set to plummet over the next few months.

Surveys from the Confederation of British Industry and the British Chambers of Commerce have indicated that manufacturing output is set to pick up because factories have run down stocks to the point where they need to increase production to meet strong consumer demand.

Some analysts, such as Mr Cates, believe this portends ill for inflation, because the pressure on capacity will force up prices. But even those in the City who expect the reappearance of inflation do not expect it to happen before the election.

Indeed, some in the City, such as Roger Bootle, chief economist at HSBC, believe the final piece in the jigsaw will fall into place over the coming year as investment starts to respond to stronger growth and a pick up in corporate profits.

Analysts now expect a tough budget aimed at pleasing the financial markets. If the package is deemed suitably stringent, base rates will remain on hold at least until the spring, and may even come down a shade.

Leader comment, page 8

Analysis Chancellor re-writes D-day history

Larry Elliott

KENNETH CLARKE has had a good week. In fact, the Chancellor has had a good summer, but this week has been a bit special. On the fourth anniversary of Black Wednesday, hardly anybody mentioned the D-word.

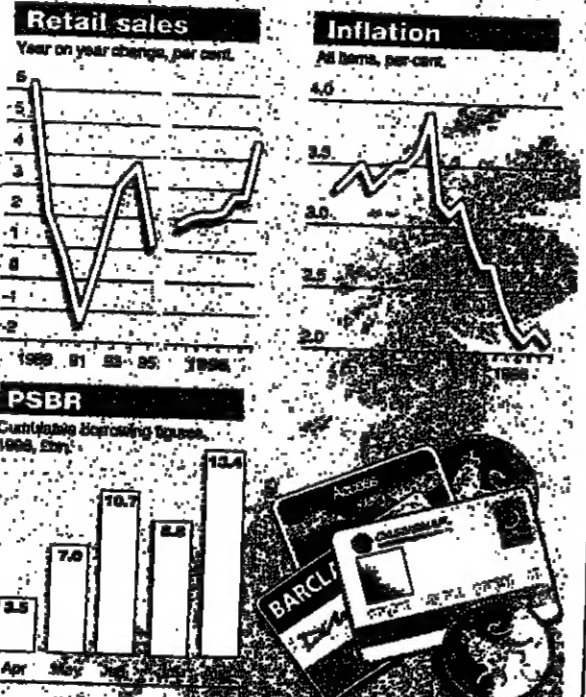
As far as Mr Clarke is concerned, this collective amnesia is a sign of success. Four years ago, Britain had just been dumped out of the Exchange Rate Mechanism, the economy left without a rudder and the Government sent into a spiral of decline from which it has yet to recover.

Ministers admit that after September 16, 1992, things were never quite the same again: it was followed within six months by the furore over pit closures, arms to Iraq, Norman Lamont's problems with his Access bill, and the Charles and Di break-up.

Not all these difficulties can be put down to devaluation, of course, but the period from late 1992 to early 1993 was marked by a feeling that the Government had lost control. Consumer confidence fell like a stone, and the Conservative party's opinion poll ratings followed suit.

It was into this situation

UK economy



that Mr Clarke was catapulted in May 1993, his predecessor having made one gaffe too many with his "je ne regrette rien" quip on the stump in the Newbury by-election.

In three respects, the new Chancellor was lucky. First, Mr Lamont was the lightning conductor for all the public resentment heaped on the Government after Black Wednesday. Second, the sacked Chancellor had just introduced a draconian yet skillful Budget, in which hefty tax



Lamont regrets nothing. Livingstone damns with faint praise

with his Panglossian view of the economy. He argues that recovery would have happened with or without devaluation because the supply side changes of the 1980s had made Britain stronger than in the dark days of the 1970s.

Every City analyst dismisses this for what it is: bunkum. Britain's departure from the ERM led to a 15 per cent fall in the exchange rate and a cut of four percentage points in base rates. Companies which had been battling for survival were revived, consumers could start to keep up with mortgage payments.

But the Chancellor has kept plugging away, safe in the knowledge that the Labour Party's support for the disastrous ERM experiment has left him virtually immune from Opposition attack. The voters, so far, have proved hard to win round, as on every other occasion a Government has suffered the humiliation of devaluation.

The other side of the equation has involved Mr Clarke trying to re-establish the Government's reputation for economic competence. Here, the Chancellor has been far more successful: so much so that Ken Livingstone says he is the best (or, more accurately, least bad) of the five Conservative chancellors since 1978.



Never a politician to worry

Never a politician to worry about much about upsetting people, Mr Clarke has faced down the Governor of the Bank of England over interest rates and won. He has called the economy right at almost every turn and has rightly resisted attempts by backbenchers to bounce him into unaffordable tax cuts.

As the Opposition points out, there are still structural problems with the economy that the Chancellor has not addressed. But the Tories have claimed back Labour's lead on economic competence and there is every sign that the economy is set to rock in 1997. In the past, the current configuration of the economy would have been enough to guarantee the Government victory. If the Conservatives lose, it will be despite the economy, not because of it.

Leader comment, page 8; Notebook, page 11

Major claims moral high ground

Blair's 'big government' plans would stifle choice, PM says

Michael White
Political Editor

JOHN Major moved to wrest back the moral high ground from Tony Blair last night, when he accused New Labour of still hankering after "big government" solutions, and insisted that his own ambition to shrink the state and the tax bill was "as much a moral case as an economic one".

In a speech intended to address the changing role of government from a practical, not theoretical, standpoint, the prime minister cited reforms as diverse as the Citizen's Charter, the NHS internal market and sweeping privatisation as proof of the Tory achievement over 17 years.

Shorter hospital queues, some of the cheapest utility prices in Europe, less bureaucracy, and more responsive services were the result. "The

public service has to be picked up, shaken down, reshaped and given a new culture," he said.

The political implication of his Spectator Lecture at the QE II conference centre in London amounted to a challenge to Blairite Labour to set out its philosophy of government — to show voters that a "fundamental philosophical and political divide" still exists between the parties.

Invoking the Asian-US model of government, which spends about a third of gross national product (GNP) — in contrast to the 50 per cent common in western Europe — he repeated the long-stated target of reducing Britain's expenditure to below 40 per cent, a goal which has defeated ministers for years.

"Moral is a word I usually prefer to leave to the Church. But it is apt for what I intend to say. For example, is it moral to take from individuals the right to make personal decisions? I think not. "It is moral to impose obligations on employers like the Social Chapter and the minimum wage, that will cost jobs and prevent those without jobs from getting them? Again I think not." His words will infuriate losers in the free market economic model.

He extended the argument in favour of "choice" and lower income tax — compulsorily taken from citizens and thus diminishing their choices. Big government stifles enterprise and encourages a culture of dependency, the prime minister insisted.

Likening western European democratic socialism — "or even social democracy" he quipped — to a milder version of Stalinism, he said both stemmed from a desire to tax, regulate and interfere.

"The more I see of government from the inside the more I believe those failures were predictable, the result of applying fundamental principles that are diametrically opposed to common sense, common freedom and common sense," Mr Major said.

"I can hear the cries of 'uncaring Conservatives' already forming on the lips of our opponents. Cut taxes? Just an electoral bribe, they say. End capital taxation? Just a ramp for the well-to-do. These cries just blur the argument. They are nonsense, we shall not be put off by them."

Ironically, Mr Major's repeated pledge to renew electoral bribes to end capital gains and inheritance taxes when funds permit is opposed by the Treasury and would largely help the well-to-do. He was also reproaching his own right wing.

"No Conservative would argue that the state should not have responsibility to provide a secure defence or an effective police force. Equally it is right that we should provide a universal access to a taxpayer-funded health service and provide every child with a choice of state-funded education. Other areas are self-evident, such as the welfare safety net," he said.

In fact, all three are under attack from the New Right.

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Is Clint Eastwood a sexist control freak, prone to violence and unable to hold down a real relationship with a woman? Or is he a deeply sensitive artist, who has spent his career advancing the interests of women?

Jonathan Freedland, G2 cover story

GARY LINEKER THINKS RUGBY'S LUCKY. IT'S ONLY GOT 57 OLD FARTS.

Radio Times

With supermarket sales and generous gifts, the art world is clearly in capital form

Ab Fab store makes move into selling pictures with pasta and paté



High street art... A shopper at Harvey Nichols checks out culture while wrestling with her choice of crisps

Alex Bellos goes shopping in style

ANDY Warhol's Campbell soup tins may have been art derived from supermarkets...

gallery and bargaining with a dealer, shoppers at the upmarket London department store in Knightsbridge were able to flick through racks of paintings...

the end of next month to Art Supermarket - a display of hundreds of paintings by several artists...

organiser James West. It is also a way to cut the cost of exhibiting in art galleries...

Mr West stole the idea from Barcelona, where art supermarkets have existed for the last decade...

found your own thing." Her colleague Brian Daly said: "People love to look through bins. It's especially important in the world of collecting."

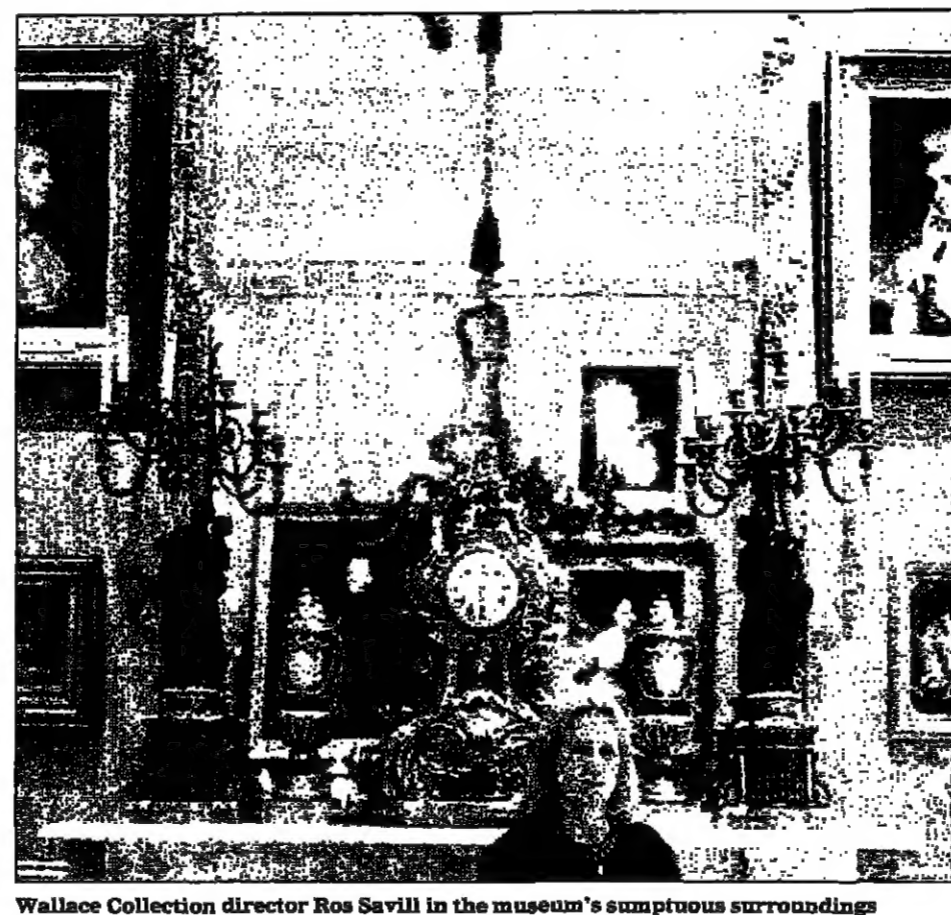
£2½m donation to 'best museum in the world'

Maev Kennedy on Wallace's windfall

AN anonymous donor has given the Wallace Collection in London £2.5 million towards a £10 million project to improve facilities and make its sumptuous galleries better known...

centenary of the collection in 2000 aims to add a café in a glassed-in courtyard, and to convert the rabbit warren underground areas into temporary exhibition, lecture and study spaces...

most spectacular works were bought through Christie's by the third and fourth Marquesses of Hertford, and Sir Richard Wallace, the illegitimate son of the fourth...



Wallace Collection director Ros Savill in the museum's sumptuous surroundings

Minister rejects university tuition fees

Government funding to continue 'without any change of structure'

John Carvel Education Editor

THE Government appeared yesterday to rule out the imposition of tuition fees on undergraduates when ministers rejected proposals from the university vice-chancellors for students to take out loans worth £20,000 to cover the costs of their higher education...

silence on the future of university funding after student leaders protested at the plans being discussed by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals at their annual conference in Sheffield...

of tuition were vetoed by the Prime Minister when they were floated in Whitehall. He insisted that free access to university was one of the essential ladders of opportunity in a classless society...

derfunding growing to £6 billion by 2005. The main proposal was a new system of long-term student loans to cover maintenance and tuition fees rising to £2,400 a year, repayable through a 3 per cent supplementary rate of national insurance...

costs. We will be putting our proposals to Dearing, but I do not expect any change in that kind of structure. Douglas Trainer, president of the National Union of Students, said after meeting senior vice-chancellors that the CVCP looked likely to back down when they decide on the new funding policy in Sheffield today...

Guardian/NUS award judges find harder news edge

STUDENT papers have rediscovered the art of hard-hitting news reporting, the judges of the Guardian/National Union of Students media awards agreed yesterday when choosing this year's shortlist...

The most heartening change since last year was the advance in news coverage on subjects of direct relevance to student readers, including tuition fees, book shortages and quality of teaching, said the judges, who included Diana Madill, Radio 5 Live presenter, Rosie Boycott, editor of Esquire, and photographer Terry O'Neill...

PM's multi-coloured gossip box opened at last

Michael White Political Editor

ALTHERTHO unknown to most of British prime ministers emerged last night in the shape of 'Old Stripsey', a blue and pink striped variation on the familiar red ministerial dispatch box which contains the 'juicy stuff' about intelligence and political gossip...

boxes. It was blue with a red stripe in my days, and it was known as 'Old Stripsey'. And it would contain not just intelligence, but other highly confidential and personal stuff," he told the BBC documentary-maker, Michael Cockerell...

ghan reveals that, such is the "lonely task" of being prime minister, he would sometimes discuss personal matters, including relations with cabinet colleagues - only with the Queen. "The Queen was always very interested in that kind of relationship and one could unburden oneself to her. I don't think I'm betraying any confidences when I say I think there were occasions when she could talk to me about her personal issues," the former Labour prime minister said...

Debt-ridden Tory MP stands down to avert deselection

Rebecca Smithers Political Correspondent

ROY Thomason, the Conservative MP plunged into debt by the collapse of his business empire, last night averted deselection by announcing his plans to step down at the general election...

claiming that pressure on his family was a factor in his decision not to stand again. He accepted his party was "divided" over his candidacy. The former leader of Bournemouth council built up a property empire and a nursing home business. Both became overstretched, leaving him with debts said to exceed £6 million. The banks saved him from bankruptcy - which would have forced him to stand down, leaving John Major to cope with minority government...

Ministers split over cattle cull

Ewen MacAskill, Chief Political Correspondent

A SPLIT between Cabinet ministers over the handling of the beef crisis has developed on the eve of today's Downing Street meeting to discuss whether to backtrack on the proposed cull...

Some ministers are angry with what is seen as a gung ho approach by the Agriculture Minister, Douglas Hogg, in this week's negotiations in Europe. They argue he should have been trying to secure agreement on ending the BSE export ban, rather than charging around seeking confrontation...

Mr Hogg, who is seeking to abandon the selective cull of 125,000 cattle, won a little breathing space when the European Commission yesterday agreed to look at new evidence from Oxford scientists that BSE will die out naturally in five years and the cull does not have to be as extensive as planned...

The Government welcomed the announcement in Brussels. The previous day the commission had said Britain must adhere to its planned cull. The concession will not be enough to protect Mr Hogg from the anger of colleagues...

The Scottish Secretary, Michael Forsyth, came closest to voicing publicly the extent of the rift when he pressed yesterday for "reasoned argument and discussion" with Britain's European partners...

Speaking on BBC Radio 5, Mr Hogg stopped just short of ending the UK-wide approach to the crisis and adopting a regional approach, whereby Scotland, where many of the herds have been

grazed and are free from BSE, would go it alone. The Brussels concession adds a further complication to the Downing Street meeting, making it harder for Mr Hogg to go ahead with his plan to press ahead with unilaterally announcing a reduction in the size of the cull...

John Major agreed to the cull at the European summit in Florence before the summer in return for a vague promise from the other European countries about lifting the ban...

Speaking before the commission's concession, he said it had been on "shaky scientific ground" in refusing to look at the Oxford findings. The shadow agriculture minister, Gavin Strang, contrasted the claim by the Prime Minister at the time of the Florence summit that it had been a great success...

It advocates eating lamb, it can act as protection like a vaccine - but not lamb fed on the meal containing bovine protein. As with cows, sheep have contracted BSE from that infected feed," he said.

Strike at care home on place for problem girl

Sarah Boseley

STAFF in a children's home in Brent, north London, have taken strike action to force the local authority to remove a disturbed and difficult 15-year-old girl from their care...

The girl, who was remanded into the custody of the local authority, charged with kidnapping and abducting a social worker at knife-point and stealing £100, should have been sent to a secure unit while she waits for her case to be heard in court...

Brent's social services director, Mike Boyle, said yesterday, however, that they had tried for weeks to get her a bed, but all three units in London were full. The dispute blew up at the end of last week. The girl had been placed in the children's home temporarily...

"The girl has been rejected constantly, by everyone around her," Mr Boyle said. "She is very badly damaged. This girl is in pain and at times has what can only be described as explosions of rage." On her birthday last Wednesday, she howled, threw things and cut herself, although she did not assault anybody, he added...

Extra carers had been deployed in the home and new admissions were stopped while she was there. There were three or four children in the home, which is staffed for 10, and at one stage five additional members of staff were put in. The girl's behaviour improved last Thursday, but on Friday morning, Unison, the union representing staff, said there would be a walk-out if there was no alternative care plan in place by 5pm...

Not happy with the council's undertakings, the staff walked out on Friday night, and were replaced by agency workers. The girl was moved to a children's home in another borough the following morning. Brian Butterworth, branch secretary of Unison, said staff went on strike because they did not feel they had been given sufficient assurances that the problem would be handled properly. "I think it's for the best that we forced the issue..."

While Mr Boyle condemned the action, which could have left the other children in the home to fend for themselves, he says management feels a degree of sympathy and understanding. The real problem was the shortage of secure beds. A spokeswoman for the Department of Health said: "There is an expansion programme going on. There will be an additional 170 places by the middle of next year. It is something we are aware of and we are taking action..."

Serious staffing shortfalls 'are fuelled by scandals'

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

ALMOST one in 10 of children's homes has no manager, and fewer than 30 per cent of their staff have any relevant qualification, official figures showed yesterday. Fewer than 9 per cent of staff are studying for a qualification, the figures indicate. The proportion doing so has fallen despite government intentions to improve skills...

The figures come amid concern at the emergence of a growing number of past scandals in children's homes. Brian Waller, who chairs the children and families committee of the Association of Directors of Social Services, said it was "quite disgraceful" that so little was being achieved to improve the calibre of staff in the homes. The figures have been produced as part of the annual social services workforce survey. They show that vacancies for managers rose from 7.5 per cent in 1994 to 9.3 per cent in 1995 - the first increase since the surveys started in 1992. Vacancies for child care

staff in homes did fall, from 8.9 per cent to 7.9 per cent. However, the proportion of staff with a relevant qualification was only 28.7 per cent (23.8 per cent in 1994) and the proportion of all staff studying for a qualification dropped from 9.2 per cent to 8.9 per cent. Improving training and qualifications was one of the main recommendations of the Warner inquiry in 1992, following a scandal in homes in Leicestershire. Mr Waller, who is social services director of Leicestershire, said social workers were no doubt deterred from seeking home manager and deputy posts by the relentless, negative publicity about the sector. "For the last few weeks, there hasn't been a day when there hasn't been some kind of problem in the papers. It's bound to have an impact on career aspirations..."

The nature of the job was also getting more difficult, Mr Waller said. Although there were only some 1,000 homes left open, they were accommodating the most challenging children who were hard to place in foster care.

هكرامن التصيل

Fifty years ago today, Winston Churchill spoke passionately in Switzerland about the need for a "United States of Europe". Last night the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, speaking in the same hall in Zurich, gave Churchill's theme a sceptical gloss which pointed up divisions in the Government and Conservative Party over European integration. While he was parading his doubts, Jacques Santer, president of the European Commission, was insisting that the euro must come into being in 1999, in spite of German doubts and the difficulties some countries may have in meeting the economic criteria. At the same time, a UN report warned a single currency would bring soaring unemployment. Guardian staff report on the latest conflicts and contradictions over Europe



Sceptic: Malcolm Rifkind in Switzerland yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: RUBEN SPRICH

"Yet all the while there is a remedy which, if... adopted by the great majority of people in many lands, would as by a miracle transform the whole scene and would in a few years make all Europe, or the greater part of it, as free and happy as Switzerland is today. What is this sovereign remedy? It is to re-create the European fabric, or as much of it as we can, and to provide it with a structure under which it can dwell in peace, safety and freedom. We must build a kind of United States of Europe."
 — Winston Churchill, September 19, 1946

"We did not follow exactly Churchill's call for a United States of Europe. Nor is it the case that Churchill expected or wanted Britain to be part of such a United States... he referred to Britain, the US and the Soviet Union being 'the friends and sponsors of the new Europe', a role quite different from that proposed for France and Germany."
 — Malcolm Rifkind, September 18, 1996



Vision of unity: Churchill in Zurich in 1946

PHOTOGRAPH: HULTON DEUTSCH

Rifkind echoes sceptics' warnings

'EU should not be political laboratory'

Even MacAskill, Chief Political Correspondent

THE Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, reinforced his claim to be a contender for the Tory leadership last night when he delivered his most Euro-sceptical speech yet, saying a single currency could divide the European Union. Mr Rifkind, speaking in Zurich to mark Winston Churchill's speech 50 years ago calling for a United States of Europe, said that almost all of the 12 countries would be unable to meet the convergence criteria for a single currency for many years. The speech provoked a hostile reaction from other European leaders, including the

president of the European Commission, Jacques Santer, who insisted a single currency was inevitable.

It also angered pro-European Tory MPs, who have watched Mr Rifkind move from being in sympathy with their approach to a careful neutrality, and then mildly Euro-sceptical on becoming Defence Secretary. On becoming Foreign Secretary last year, Mr Rifkind, with one eye on the post-general election leadership contest, acknowledged the dominance of Euro-scepticism in the party by adopting a strongly Euro-sceptical line.

The shadow foreign secretary, Robin Cook, in a speech today will say that Britain faces important foreign policy choices over the next five years and the Conservatives

cannot be trusted to make them because of in-fighting.

Mr Rifkind reiterated opposition to closer European union: "I reject too the ratchet of wending institutional integration that is a decade behind the reality of a competitive, decentralised world. We cannot treat the EU as an experiment in a sanitised political laboratory."

Recalling Churchill's speech, he said: "Fifty years ago, Churchill came to Zurich to speak about the tragedy of Europe. Today I want to speak of Europe's recovery, the record of 50 years, and of the daunting new challenges that we now face."

"We did not follow exactly Churchill's call for a United States of Europe. Nor is it the case that Churchill expected or wanted Britain to be part of such a United States, if it was created."

"In the final paragraph of the Zurich speech, he referred to Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union being 'the friends and sponsors of the new Europe', a role quite different from that pro-

posed for France and Germany."

Churchill had envisaged a partnership between France and Germany and Mr Rifkind said that had proved correct for peace in Europe. "Don't believe what you read in some British papers: people in Britain admire what Germany has achieved. Friendship between Britain and Germany is as much a part of

Europe's future as co-operation between Germany and France."

But there had been in recent years a sense of disillusionment with the EU. "This disillusionment runs deeper than a resurgence of insularity or of blinkered nationalism. There is a more profound reason. It is a sense of alienation that people have, of being remote from fundamen-

tal change taking place around them."

He expressed opposition to moves by other European countries for an expansion of qualified majority voting on foreign and defence issues. That would not have prevented tragedies such as Bosnia.

Mr Santer attempted to counter Mr Rifkind's pessimism on a single currency:

"We are on the way to an unprecedented success in the history of European integration, indeed in the history of Europe itself." The single currency would emerge on target on January 1, 1999, he said.

The Irish prime minister, John Bruton, said there was a contradiction between Britain's chronic criticism of Brussels and its eagerness to see other countries join. "The

Union can't be all that bad," he said.

The extent to which Mr Rifkind is winning over the Euro-sceptics was confirmed when John Redwood, likely to be a leadership challenger if the Conservatives lose the next election, expressed delight with the warning on a single currency.

Hugo Young, page 9

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Santer brushes aside Britain's euro doubts

Stephen Bates in Strasbourg and Alex David Smith in Paris

THE President of the European Commission, Jacques Santer, yesterday brushed aside British reservations about the planned single currency, insisting that the euro would come into being on January 1, 1999, and nothing could stop it.

Despite growing concerns about the social and economic costs of a single currency, Mr Santer was bullish as he addressed the Strasbourg parliament.

"We are on the way to an unprecedented success in the history of European integration, indeed in the history of Europe itself," he said. "The single currency will happen... It will come into being on January 1, 1999, and a substantial number of member states will be part of it from the outset."

He said the single currency was of paramount importance to round off the internal market and secure a lasting,

stable basis for its competitiveness, to develop a monetary policy that is geared to the needs of the European economy and finally to establish its place on world financial markets."

Mr Santer's remarks were the more pointed for coming immediately after Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, had warned in Zurich that the single currency could divide Europe and destroy the vision of the European Union's founding fathers.

Mr Santer was backed by John Bruton, the Irish prime minister, speaking in the debate as the current president of the Council of Ministers. He said: "Economic and monetary union must commence on time and in line with treaty requirements... the EMU convergence criteria do no more than set out a sensible path for budgetary policy to which every member state should aspire in any event."

Elsewhere in the debate, however, there was criticism of the EU for not meeting the

aspirations of its citizens. Klaus Haensch, the president of the parliament, said: "More and more people associate the EU with social breakdown and the destruction of jobs. We must limit it again with the creation of jobs and social progress. The success of monetary union depends on this."

In France — which, with Germany, is driving the monetary union project — the government's unveiling of its 1997 budget yesterday left economists sceptical that Euro-enthusiasm alone could restart the economy and reduce the country's 12.5 per cent unemployment rate.

Critics said the plan by the prime minister, Alain Juppe, to cut France's budget deficit to the 3 per cent of gdp required under Maastricht single currency criteria contained a large share of accounting wheezes. But the day after France and Germany restated their determination to merge their currencies, Mr Juppe insisted had produced "a budget that supports the economy."

Single currency 'will push up jobless total'

Sarah Ryle

UNEMPLOYMENT levels in Europe will soar after the single currency is introduced in 1999 and economic growth rates will plummet to zero, the trade and development arm of the United Nations said last night.

The drive to meet the Maastricht criteria on inflation and government debt levels will severely damage growth rates and increase the rate of European unemployment to 15 per cent, according to the senior economist of UNCTAD.

Vilmuz Akyiz warned that current European Monetary Union targets were stifling growth and called for an end to the "obsession" with low inflation, urging a total rethink of monetary policy on a scale last seen in the early 1980s. He said: "Unemployment should be at the top of the agenda, and growth targets should be raised in order to get investment going."

Dr Akyiz said the UK should be aiming for growth of 4 per cent, compared to the latest prediction of 2.5 per cent by the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke.

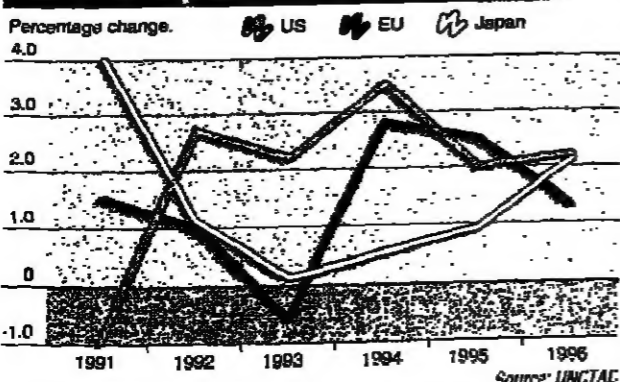
According to UNCTAD's annual trade and development report, published last night, growth in the European Union is already on course to fall to 1.3 per cent this year, the second annual decline in a row compared to continuing improvements in growth in Japan and a return to expansion in the US.

Italy and the UK have seen greater expansion than their EU partners since they fell out of the Exchange Rate Mechanism, and Dr Akyiz said this illustrated the role of flexible exchange rates in stimulating growth. He said that Britain would continue to benefit from being able to set its own rates, but warned that members of a single currency might begin to operate a "beggar my neighbour" policy to counter this.

UNCTAD warned that without a commitment to higher, sustainable growth, or the ability to use exchange rates to stimulate growth, nations would fall back on trade barriers to boost jobs.

The report predicted that the global economy would expand this year by less than the 1995 rate of 2.4 per cent, making the recovery since 1993 after world recession one of the weakest on record.

World output



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Bosnia team braced for uphill fight

Julian Borger in Sarajevo

INTERNATIONAL mediators yesterday began the arduous task of building a new Bosnian government after election results which confirmed the political control of nationalists over the country's Muslim, Serb and Croat communities.

Diplomats who attended meetings with the newly elected leaders yesterday said that, although there was no talk of secession, there was also no progress on setting up joint institutions.

Unofficial results from Saturday's elections for a new tripartite presidency confirmed that the three nationalist leaders had crushed moderate challengers within their own communities.

Of the three, the Muslim leader and presidential incumbent, Alija Izetbegovic, narrowly won most votes. Once the results are certified, he will become chairman of the presidency, and the country's post-war head of state.

The other two members of the presidency will be Momcilo Krajisnik, a Bosnian Serb separatist leader, and Kresimir Zubak, a leading Bosnian Croat nationalist.

Mr Izetbegovic was visited in Sarajevo yesterday by Carl Bildt, the international community's High Representative in Bosnia, and diplomats from the Contact Group of the United States, Britain, France, Germany and Russia to discuss power-sharing institutions.

They then travelled to the Serb separatist stronghold of Pale to meet Mr Krajisnik. They are due to see Mr Zubak this morning.

After meeting Mr Krajisnik, Mr Bildt had no progress to report.

Mr Bildt was trying to organise a preliminary meeting of the presidency in Sarajevo to discuss new power-sharing institutions, such as a multi-ethnic national assembly, a council of ministers and a central bank, and a "quick start" package of legislation for the new state.

Mr Bildt and the Contact Group's first job was to find an acceptable venue for presidential meetings.

Mr Krajisnik, the diplomats said, refused to contemplate meeting in central Sarajevo, which is in Muslim-Croat Federation territory.

Instead, he suggested sites on the former front line, which in most places now marks the ethnic boundary between the federation and the Republika Srpska.

The quarrel over venues will be only the first of hundreds of tough negotiating sessions ahead. All three are known as hard bargainers.

All can now claim democratic mandates: Mr Krajisnik won 67 per cent of the vote in Republika Srpska; Mr Izetbegovic more than 80 per cent of the Muslim vote; and Mr Zubak 68 per cent of the Croat vote.

Discussions between Mr Krajisnik and Mr Zubak is expected in the next few days to prepare the ground for a full meeting of the presidency.

David Fairhall in Sarajevo adds: The German defence minister, Volker Rühle, yesterday reaffirmed his determination that his soldiers play a more active role in whatever military presence replaces the Nato-led peace implementation force in Bosnia after December.

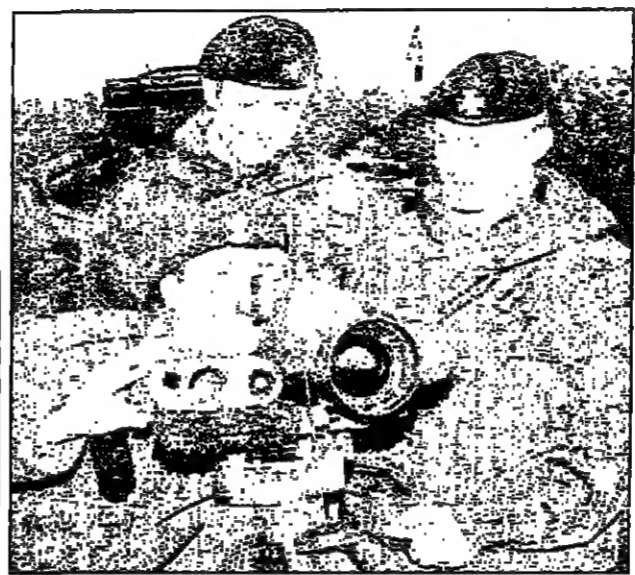
"If there is a follow-on force, Germany will be part of it," he said during a tour of British and German units in Sarajevo.



British Challenger tanks race towards an imaginary enemy across the Drawaska proving ground in northern Poland as part of the pioneering Nato exercises. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVE BRIDGES

Poland hails Nato invasion

The glittering prize in the historic struggle between East and West has welcomed its former enemy, writes Ian Traynor in Drawaska



Left: Polish and British troops monitor the exercises jointly. PHOTOGRAPH: IAN DUNNING

CAPTAIN Jacek Nowak grins, lights another cigarette, and rubs his eyes in disbelief at the first sighting of Challenger battle tanks roaring across the plains of northern Poland.

The Polish signals officer can barely contain his glee. The Desert Rats, the British army's renowned Seventh Armoured Brigade, has invaded this vast military playground embracing 150 square miles of bog, river, forest and heath.

For Capt Nowak, aged 31, after 12 years in the Polish army it is a moment to relish. "This is the real beginning of our joining Nato. We've changed. Europe has changed. Before, the Russians ordered us around, but now the Warsaw Pact is finished. We're independent. And it's great that the British are here."

For three weeks, the Desert Rats, under the command of Brigadier David Montgomery, a 44-year-old distant relative of the famous second world war field-marshal, have been going through their paces in an initiative that graphically reflects Europe's new strategic reality.

"This speaks volumes about the new Europe," said Nicholas Soames, the armed services minister. "For the Seventh Brigade to be here in a former Warsaw Pact training area shows the enormous change in the strategic environment seven years after the [Berlin] wall fell."

About 3,500 British servicemen in 1,150 vehicles — 350 of them armoured — have been transported here from their German bases. It is the biggest movement ever of Nato forces into former Warsaw Pact territory.

"This is a very rare opportunity to train as a full brigade," said Brig Montgomery. "This exercise area is bigger than anything available to the British army in Europe, bigger than Salisbury Plain."

For the British, Nato expansion is simply a great training opportunity. For the Poles, however, the ulterior motives are writ large.

"This should help us very much to join Nato," said Major Slawomir Zarski, the military chaplain for the district.

Maj Zarski is testimony to the dramatic changes of the past few years. In deeply Catholic Poland, army chaplains were banned under the communists. He has been a military chaplain for four years. "Even if Nato says no to Poland, we'll just keep asking, keep knocking on the door."

After years of equivocation and agonised hand-wringing in the West, the door is finally

opening. Nato is apparently about to give a qualified yes to the Poles, the Czechs and the Hungarians.

The United States secretary of state, Warren Christopher, said last week that in the first half of next year an alliance summit will announce who will be included in expansion to the east and when it will take place.

Is this an historic mistake that will again divide the continent and trigger a fresh era of confrontation with Russia? Or is it the necessary response to the security dilemmas thrown up by the end of the cold war?

Seen from Drawaska and Warsaw, there is no debate. "I don't even want to think of Nato saying no to Poland," said Jerzy Milewski, the national security advisor to Poland's president, Aleksandr Kwasniewski. "We've had the strategic ambition to join Nato for five years and we

want it unconditionally. We want to be an ordinary member with ordinary rights and ordinary obligations."

That sentiment is shared by more than four out of five Poles. Warsaw opinion polls have shown 83 per cent support for Nato membership. Two-thirds of people believe that Russian objections to Polish membership have little to do with Moscow's security fears, and more to do with Russia's habit of dominating Poland. Half of respondents fear that East and West, Russia and Nato, will settle Poland's fate behind the backs of the Poles.

History has seared such suspicions into the national psyche. Traditionally, Poland has been the prize in the battle between East and West that has continued for more than 200 years.

From Catherine the Great of Russia and Frederick of Prussia in the 18th century to

invaded Poland five years later.

When it comes to Nato's expansion, it is Poland, not Hungary nor the Czech Republic that is the prize. By far the biggest of the prospective new members with an army of 230,000, Poland is the strategic key to central Europe, the real focus of Russian resistance to Nato's eastward march.

In 1985, Poland had three neighbours — the Soviet Union, communist East Germany, and Czechoslovakia. None of them now exist and seven years later, Poland has seven neighbours — one measure of the dramatic regional changes that heighten the country's sense of uncertainty and insecurity.

It is emerging that the price of Nato membership is that the Poles will have to forego Nato nuclear deployments and the stationing of foreign troops to assuage Russian and Ukrainian protests.

"The Ukrainian position is well-known and we all respect it," said Mr Soames.

Mr Milewski agrees that "nuclear weapons are not an issue. Maybe there is no need for any nuclear weapons in Europe." He added: "If the Nato leadership decides it is right to move foreign troops here, we will not decline that."

But as the frogmen of the Desert Rats come bounding ashore, guns ablaze, from below the waters of the River Drawa and Brig Montgomery deploys his Challengers, Warsaw and Samitars, one sceptical Polish observer sighs: "Oh, yes, it's great the Brits are here. It's great Nato is here. Just a pity they're about half a century late. Why couldn't they have done this in 1939?"

Key Vichy official must stand trial

Paul Webster

AFTER 15 years of legal limbo, a decision of the court has decided that Maurice Papon, a former official of the wartime Vichy regime, must stand trial in an assize court on charges of crimes against humanity.

Mr Papon, aged 86, a minister in the 1978 rightwing government, was in charge of Jewish affairs in the Bordeaux region from 1942 to 1944 and has been accused of arranging the deportation of 1,690 Jews to Nazi death camps in 10 trains. He will be the second Vichy official to stand trial for crimes against humanity following the life imprisonment of the Lyon Milice chief, Paul Touvier, in 1994. He died in prison.

Touvier, who was accused of murdering Jewish hostages, was a minor figure who went into hiding for nearly 50 years before being arrested. But Mr Papon, who never had to explain his collaboration with the Nazis, became a member of the post-war Gaullist Party. He was decorated as Paris police chief in 1961.

The court's ruling yesterday marks an end to obstruction of trials of Vichy officials for complicity in Nazi anti-semitic persecution. The late president, François Mitterrand, a Vichy civil servant at the height of the deportations, opposed the public examination of Vichy guilt, but last year President Jacques Chirac described the actions of Philippe Pétain's regime as criminal.

Mr Papon intends to appeal to the constitutional council but his ill health may prevent a trial anyway. He has just recovered from a heart operation.

His lawyer, Jean-Marc Varaut, said the former minister, who was forced to resign in 1981 when details of his wartime record were discovered, said he was disappointed at the court decision. The judges decided that Mr Papon should face 10 charges — six more than asked for by the state prosecutor in criminal proceedings in March.

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EU family split on life choices

John Palmer in Brussels

A REPORT into the composition of households by the European Union's statistical arm shows a contrast between countries in northern and southern Europe.

Of the entire EU population, around 10 per cent of people now live alone. But this figure rises sharply in northern Europe, notably in Denmark where 22 per cent of households consist of lone individuals. It falls to 7.5 per cent in Italy, 8.7 per cent in Greece and 4 per cent in Spain.

Although most lone-person households consist of young people in northern Europe, most individuals living alone in southern Europe and in Ireland are elderly. On the other hand, nearly a fifth of the population in Greece, Spain and Portugal live in multi-generational households that include grandparents.

On average 90 per cent of couples who live together in the EU are married, a figure which rises close to 100 per cent in Mediterranean countries. But once again Denmark stands out with only 76 per cent of couples being married.

The trend away from marriage is seen in sharper perspective when the figures for young people are analysed. On average

28 per cent of EU citizens under 30 cohabit out of wedlock. But 70 per cent of young Danes cohabit out of wedlock, a figure which falls to less than 10 per cent in Greece and Italy.

Ireland, where more than half of all households consist of five or more, is the EU member state with the largest families. In the EU, less than 7 per cent of individuals live in households with three or more children, but this figure rises to 17 per cent in Ireland.

Ireland is second only to Britain with the highest proportion (8.7 per cent) of single parent households. Germany, with only 2.5 per cent, is the EU country with the fewest single parent households.

The report concludes that in Mediterranean countries and in Ireland children tend to stay with parents until starting their own families usually after marriage. "In the north, the transition from parental home to forming a new family is less straightforward, marked by spells of living alone and in unmarried couples."

Italy's highest appeal court ruled yesterday that a Sicilian man who beat his wife "occasionally" should not have been sentenced to eight months in jail. The Court of Cassation said the occasional beatings did not amount to domestic violence, drawing protests.

مکان التعمیر

Censorship tightens on Iran writers

Kathy Evans

IRANIAN intellectuals and writers say they are facing a concerted campaign by the security services aimed at further curbing press and literary freedoms.

In recent weeks, two editors have been ordered to court, five publications suspended and the Writers' Federation banned from meeting. Intellectuals link what they see as a campaign against them with the rise of the conservatives in parliament in the closing months of Hashemi Rafsanjani's presidency.

The president is due to step down next spring, after two terms in office, unless constitutional changes clear the way for a third term. Until now, writers and liberals have viewed Mr Rafsanjani as their most powerful protector. Censorship is said to have been tightened recently, and Iranian writers say the desire to preserve Islamic ideals against Western cultural influences has led the ministry of Islamic guidance to ban hundreds of books.

Story lines are rejected because they are too romantic, or portray women other than as wives, daughters or mothers. No novels or literary works are being licensed for publication at present, say publishing sources in Tehran.

In a recent interview with the BBC Persian Service, the Iranian Writers' Federation president, Houshang Golshiri, said censorship had become so severe that novels almost inevitably ended up in the bottom drawers of their authors.

"In this country, you could not write a sentence like 'I left my house to buy some cigarettes and on the way I saw a beautiful woman'. That is the beginning of a story. Here, you could only write that you left your house to buy cigarettes," Mr Golshiri said.

Iranian television recently began broadcasting a weekly programme called Our Cultural Identity. It showed meetings of Iranian dissidents and monarchists abroad, cutting to profiles of prominent novelists, poets and newspaper proprietors at home, implying that the two groups were connected.

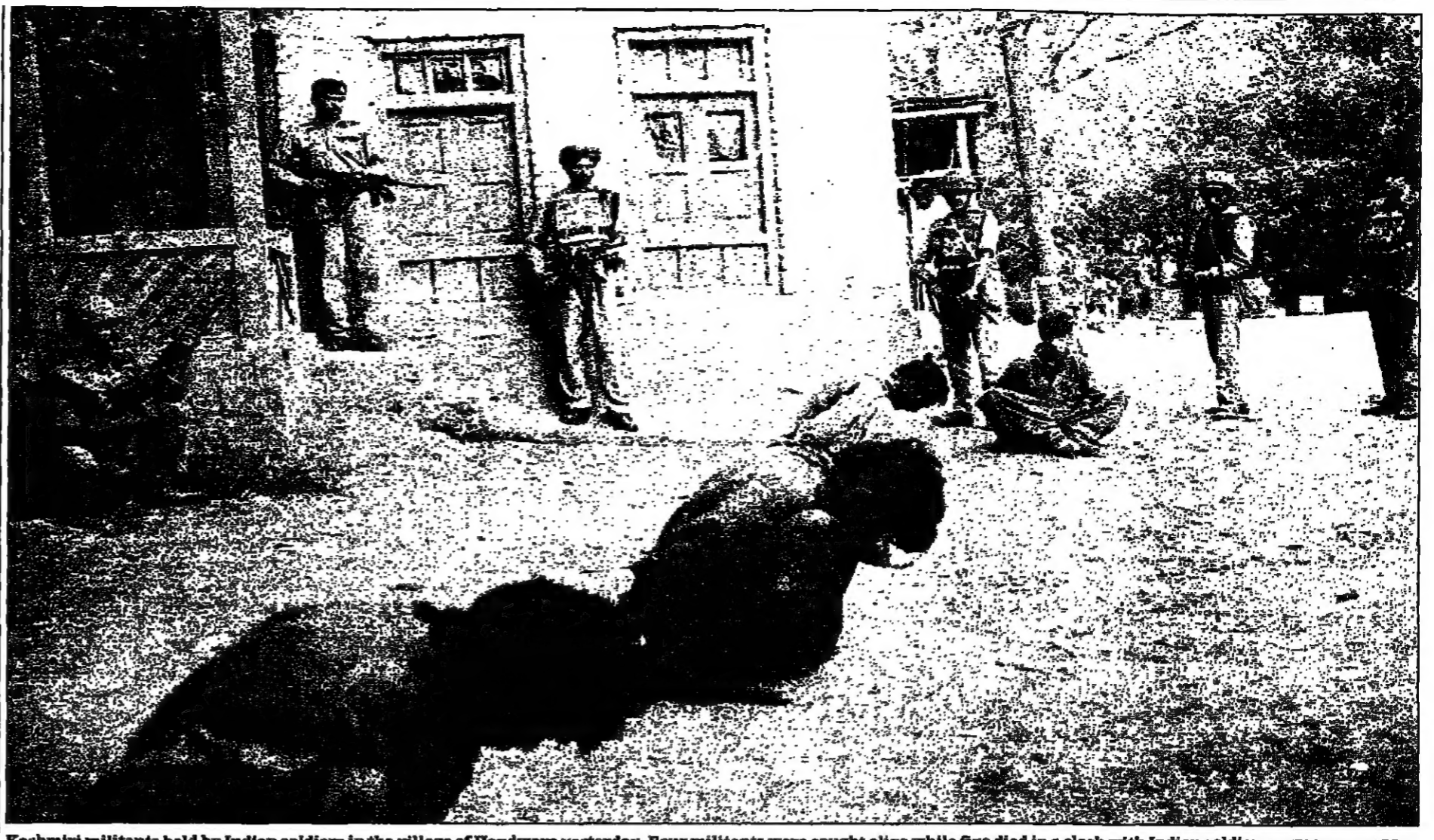
Security officials last week raided a meeting of the Iranian Writers' Federation in a private home. Mr Golshiri was taken away for questioning and now faces charges of spying for a foreign power. Farraj Sarkobi, the editor of Iran's leading literary magazine, Ardehshir, was also taken for questioning, and his magazine was suspended.

The raid followed a similar incident in Tehran last month when security men entered the home of the German cultural attaché, who had invited a number of leading writers to a private dinner party.

Iranian writers say they are seeking only to have their books published and their organisation has no political ambitions. "The meetings we were having were aimed at drawing up a charter for the Writers' Federation to demand freedom of expression and publication. The authorities told us that we were forbidden to meet again," a federation official said.

Last month, the deputy public prosecutor for Tehran announced that Reza Tehrani, editor of Keyan magazine, would be tried on charges yet to be specified, the New York organisation Human Rights Watch reported. Keyan magazine plays a key role in the debate among religious and intellectual circles on the role of Islam in political life. It is the only magazine which publishes articles by Professor Abdul Karim Saroush, the controversial Tehran university lecturer who argues that religion is a private matter.

About six weeks ago another editor, Abbas Maroufi, fled to Germany. He had been sentenced to six months' imprisonment and 25 lashes by a press court for "publishing lies" and "insulting the leader of the Islamic Republic". His magazine, Gardoun, was suspended for editorials comparing the current regime to that of the late Shah.



Kashmiri militants held by Indian soldiers in the village of Handwara yesterday. Four militants were caught alive while five died in a clash with Indian soldiers PHOTOGRAPH: ALJAZ RAH

Dole abandons his fate to the whims of pollsters

US election '96

Opinion polls now dictate the main Republican themes. Martin Walker continues his series on the presidential campaign by looking at issues as weapons

IT IS a golden rule of American politics that the initiative on issues rests with the challenger who attacks, rather than the incumbent who defends.

This year, the Republican challenger Bob Dole began by saying the issue was character. Then it became a 15 per cent across-the-board income tax cut. Then it became teenage drug use. This week, he has redefined his campaign: "This is about crime, this is about punishment."

Mr Dole's failings are in sharp contrast to Bill Clinton's successful 1992 message of "The Economy, Stupid" and his simple promise of "Change".

The economy, currently buoyant, is still Mr Clinton's most potent issue. But his subsidiary themes of education, health care, welfare and health reform match to an uncanny degree the main concerns of the "issues polling" conducted by his campaign, and echoed in independent surveys.

Significantly, the main themes pushed by Mr Dole also conform closely to the concerns expressed in the polling data. He is hammering away at crime, drugs and immigration, rather than crossing the tax cut that was supposed to be the magic bullet of his campaign. Taxation, as an issue, comes well down the list of polling concerns, with only 48 per cent of respondents to the Washington Post's poll saying this concerned them "a great deal".

All this makes for an unusual election. It is introspective, with foreign policy and the defence budget barely making a dent among voters, despite the simmering conflict with Iraq. It is only moderately concerned with the economy, taxes and the budget deficit, issues which have dominated every presidential election campaign for the past 20 years.

The issues of 1996 reflect an

America that has turned in upon itself, to the concerns of the home, family and community; to the fears of ill health and drugs; to the prospects for education; and to the dangers of violent streets.

The politics are more intimate, more personal, and less bothered by the old debate over big and intrusive government and whether it does more harm than good.

Particular themes resonate in each region. Californians usually place illegal immigration among their top three concerns, and their state government is battling with the courts over its right to deny

health care and schooling to the children of illegal immigrants. California is just climbing out of a deep and localised recession, brought about by the decline in defence spending. Last year unemployment in the state was two percentage points higher than the national average.

By contrast, today's booming Texas barely rates immigration as an issue, although the anti-immigrant movement was born in the state during the recession of the 1980s.

For both the Dole and Clinton campaigns, some of the issues which currently concern the voters are double-edged swords.

Mr Clinton may rate low on trust and on moral values, but he and his wife Hillary battled on to save a troubled marriage and raise a fine daughter. Mr Dole walked out on his first wife.

So the candidates are struck with the issues pollsters report as most compelling to voters. This may yet prove the most misleading election guide of all.

Voters often lie to pollsters: about 10 per cent more say they will vote for a black candidate than actually do so in the polling booth.

Voters also tend to mislead pollsters about the importance to them of a tax cut. Britain's Tories have long understood this, which was why they told George Bush in 1992 to stress "Trust and Taxes".

Mr Dole began fighting on just those two themes, until the pollsters reported they were not working with the voters. He then broadened his campaign to drugs, crime, immigration and the "moral crisis".

By acting on the opinion polls, he may have abandoned the single, coherent message which could have done him most good.

Top six concerns

- Are you very concerned by:
1. Education system getting worse 62 per cent
 2. Crime increasing 61 per cent
 3. AIDS spreading 61 per cent
 4. College becoming too expensive 58 per cent
 5. The welfare system 56 per cent
 6. Illegal drug use growing 55 per cent

Bottom six concerns

- Are you very concerned by:
1. Too much religion 11 per cent
 2. Whitewater 12 per cent
 3. Too much defence spending 13 per cent
 4. Term limits for Congressmen 15 per cent
 5. Ross Perot "messing up" election 16 per cent
 6. Losing America's "melting pot" charm 16 per cent

Source: Washington Post

Judges' trial of strength with Mandela

David Bensusford in Johannesburg

ADAMAGING dispute with racial overtones is raging about who should become South Africa's next chief justice.

The contest for the top post in the country's court system is between an African, backed by the overwhelming majority of judges, and the first black appointee to the supreme court bench, supported by the president, Nelson Mandela.

Heinie Van Heerden, the choice of the judges, is the longest-serving member of the appellate division. By tradition, the appointment to chief justice is based on seniority.

But black lawyers and a small group of judges campaigning for the deputy president of the constitutional court, Ismail Mahomed, have won unexpected support from Mr Mandela.

Mr Mandela's intervention has provoked furious controversy. Constitutionally, he has the power to make the appointment, subject to cabinet agreement and "consultation" with the judicial services commission.

In a reversal of procedure he has advised the commission that he favours Judge Mahomed. Opposition parties have accused him of pre-empting the commission.

Seventeen members of the appeal court — the highest division of the country's supreme court — have agreed to submit what amounts to a petition in support of Judge Van Heerden. Only one declined to support him.

This week a member of the appellate division, Joon Hefer, called on Judge Mahomed to do the "honourable" thing and withdraw. The outgoing chief justice, Michael Corbett, described the outburst as "improper".

The appeal judges also invited the provincial divisions of the supreme court to back their candidate, and most are believed to have done so.

Only about a dozen of the 150 supreme court judges are supporting Judge Mahomed.

Judge Mohamed and Judge Van Heerden are regarded as outstanding jurists. Judge Van Heerden is more experienced, but Judge Mohamed is Namibia's chief justice and is credited with having significantly contributed to the formulation of constitutional case law in South Africa.

Black lawyers associations and the dissenting judges argue that Judge Van Heerden is identified with the apartheid era. They also say the appointment of Judge Mahomed would "send a message to the nation that real change is about to begin".

But if Mr Mandela chooses him, there could be resignations among the appeal judges.

If Judge Mahomed does become the new head of the appeal court, which sits in Bloemfontein, in the Orange Free State, there will be a sweet irony.

As the first black silk at the South African bar, he suffered discrimination. Excluded from renting chambers in Johannesburg under the Group Areas Act

because the barristers' building was in a white area, he was forced to borrow desk-space from colleagues while they were in court so that he could meet clients.

He also had difficulties when visiting Bloemfontein to argue before the appellate division: he was forced to flee across the provincial border before dusk to comply with a ban on Indians staying overnight in the Orange Free State.

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One thing totally clear from the evidence is that Bishop Runcie is a heterosexual, who until his marriage led a happily celibate life. Lord St John of Fawsley

Books G2 page 14

vasion

family split life choices

Clarke's £20bn gamble
Windfall gains will boost the feelgood factor

YESTERDAY'S spurt in the volume of retail sales — they were up 4.4 per cent in August compared with a year ago — poses the prospect that the economy may expand too fast in the run-up to the election forcing the Chancellor, embarrassingly, to raise interest rates. At the moment this is only a possibility because the economy as a whole has been growing at a very modest 1.8 per cent so there is plenty of slack to be made up. But things could change very fast because this is unlike any previous election in two important respects.

tion is different is that the Governor of the Bank of England is now allowed to criticise the Government publicly if he thinks the Chancellor is taking the wrong decisions. He already thinks interest rates should go up and if a scenario emerges in which consumption roars ahead threatening to stoke up inflation and snuff out the revival of investment and exports, his objections will become extremely loud. Kenneth Clarke knows this — and the effect it would have on the City. That is why yesterday's minutes of their July 30 meeting (in which the Chancellor reassured the Governor that he was prepared to act pre-emptively if inflationary pressures pick up) can be read as a political insurance policy against things going wrong.

The soap box in a digital age
We have a right to see candidates debating on television

HE DIDN'T say yes, but more important, he didn't say no. John Major was asked on yesterday's Today programme the question which interviewers always put to prime ministers at this stage of the electoral cycle: are you ready to meet your opponent before the TV cameras during the coming campaign? Normally the answer is no. Incumbent prime ministers are invariably advised to refuse. Why give your opponent equal status with yourself? The only exception to that was the 1979 campaign, when James Callaghan was prime minister but the Conservatives were so far ahead on the polls that Labour looked more like the challengers and the Tories more like the incumbents. It was Callaghan who wanted the TV confrontation then, and Thatcher who refused. Her advisers saw two dangers: first, Callaghan might come out on top; and second, if Thatcher herself emerged triumphant, male voters might be affronted: they would not like to see a woman outgunning a man.

Salmond, given the support the SNP commands in Scotland? Even in the US, which has been staging these confrontations since Kennedy v Nixon, these issues are deeply contentious. Ross Perot is to file a law suit to challenge the decision of the joint commission of Democrats and Republicans that is charged with ordering these things to exclude him from the debates planned for this autumn.

Give Tibet back to the Tibetans
Granting autonomy would be in China's best interest as well

THE DALAI LAMA made a remarkably charitable speech yesterday in Sydney — during a visit bitterly denounced by Beijing. The latest news from Tibet is grim. Huge workteams of Chinese communist cadres have been sent into the most famous monasteries near Lhasa to "re-educate" the monks and force them to disown their spiritual leader. Yet he told the National Press Club of his conviction that "a change for the better is coming." With his usual broad smile, he suggested that a post-Deng Xiaoping leadership would be more amenable to talks without preconditions. He also restated the position that he was not calling for Tibetan independence but only for self-government. Tibet, he suggested, should become a non-militarised zone of no threat to anyone.

issue has never been addressed squarely in informal contacts. Sometimes Beijing suggests he is only playing with words, at others that he is being manipulated by foreign interests. China was also furious when the Dalai Lama intervened last year in the search for the reincarnated Panchen Lama.



Letters to the Editor
On Perry's bombshell

PEREGRINE Worsthorne implies (Why did he change his mind? September 14) that in the cold war, the US president had the final say on whether to launch a nuclear strike on the Soviet Union.

Not so. A nuclear strike could have taken place without any reference to the president. My source for this is Robert McNamara, the former American Secretary of Defence. On the 30th anniversary of the Cuban missile crisis, he replied to my questions about the nuclear chain of command as follows: "A nuclear strike was issued in 1962 did not contain today's electronic device which prevents a local commander from launching a nuclear missile without an OK from the President. Kennedy recognised that, if we invaded Cuba, the Soviets would probably respond in Europe and that in the face of a conventional Soviet attack on Western Europe it was very likely that, rather than be over-run, local US commanders or troops might take it upon themselves to launch their nuclear warheads."

contribution from his armchair on the right. In 1960 the issue was alive and kicking; it's dead now. Michael Birtchell, 20 Ravenswood Road, Bristol BS6 6BN.

To marry or not to marry: the clues are in the crossword

PRIESTLY celibacy is not at all as "seamy" as you suggest (Leader, September 17). As one of the many who, despite the constant struggle, have found deep personal fulfilment in my priesthood, I would oppose any change in the law.

ON the day when a great deal of press coverage was given to the disappearance of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Argyle and the Isles, solutions to the Guardian Quick Crossword were: "Temptress" (32A), "Freud" (9A), "Latin" (8A), "Blessedness" (8D), Echoes of Operation Overlord? Stuart A H Walker, 41 Gloucester Road, Higham Hill, Waltham Forest, London E17 6AE.

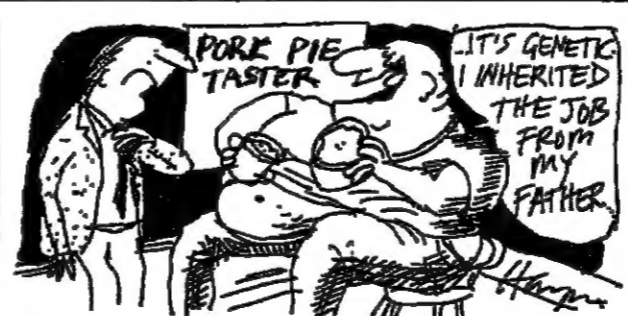
True cost of student debt

DON'T want to cause an outbreak of neo-toolism, but if you want to see some real funding cuts and denial of opportunity (Cost of a degree — £20,000, September 17) then look at further education.

principle of state-funded higher education. However, it is no accident that those who favour fees now feel emboldened to press ahead. The announcement follows the abandonment of support for the restoration of student grants by the leadership of both Labour and the National Union of Students.

British Airways and Britpop

YOUR story about the BBC and British Airways (BBC axes attack on British Airways, September 16) is damaging, and wrong in material aspects. John Birt did write to Tony Hall expressing his doubts about the 1994 Newsnight report on BA. He did so simply on the basis of having viewed the report at home, having had no prior knowledge of the item. He has not since spoken or had any communication whatsoever with Tim Bell about the report or any other BA matter. John Birt has had no dealings of any kind with BA about the Newsnight report, except the briefest of discussions with senior BA executives during the same period when the report was first broadcast.



Chewing the fat over genes

YOU suggest (The fight of the fittest, September 17) that our high rate of obesity is caused by modern environments, while worrying about estimates that "genes regulate obesity" by up to 80 per cent. But this figure does not mean that 80 per cent of fatness is due to the genes. It means that, in some populations, 80 per cent of the variation between individuals depends on which genes they have.

pend on both genes and environment — always. Furthermore, "how genes" a trait is typically depends on the environment; the effects of genes (eg which genes are fittest) will change in different environments. Peter Griffiths, (Lecturer in Philosophy of Science, Otago University, Dunedin, New Zealand.) Old Post Office, Woodrising, Norfolk NR7 4AH.

BBC bias (no, we must interrupt)

WHILE I agree with Catherine Bennett in backing the Today team against the politicians (Why Today should pull no punches, September 18), I am sorry she makes their degree of aggression the measure of how far they deserve our support.

Kenneth Clarke left him "shell-shocked". One must also admire Mr Clarke's steely determination to display his usual bouncy self (and inability to answer questions), all through Ms Ford's terrible onslaught. Princes Royal Cottage, Butterworth West, Rodborough, Stroud GL5 3UA.

A Country Diary

THE LAKE DISTRICT: The contractors were just finishing their long task of sealing up Kentmere reservoir so that it can safely replenish itself again when I passed the other day what has become an ugly waste of stones and mud on my way for another look at the source of the River Kent just below the 2,000ft contour on High Street. It should be realised that the drained reservoir could have become a permanent environmental disaster had it not been for the public spirited attitude of its present owners, James Cropper & Co. The Bursledon paper-millers, whose chairman, Mr James Cropper, is the Lord Lieutenant of Cumbria. The water from the reservoir was no longer vital to the needs of the company and water authorities were not interested in its storage facilities, so there must have been a temptation to allow the site, empty because of serious leaks in the structure, to revert back to nature. But environmentalists and the outdoor public, well accustomed to and happy with the 150-year-old artificial

lake, pressed for the reservoir to be put back into use again, and this the company eventually agreed to do, inserting a plastic lining into the outflow pipe at a cost which has now reached £110,000. The reservoir will slowly refill, the speed dependent upon rainfall this autumn and winter, and some time next year it should be full again, all 210 million gallons of it — a reservoir could have become a permanent environmental disaster had it not been for the public spirited attitude of its present owners, James Cropper & Co. The Bursledon paper-millers, whose chairman, Mr James Cropper, is the Lord Lieutenant of Cumbria. The water from the reservoir was no longer vital to the needs of the company and water authorities were not interested in its storage facilities, so there must have been a temptation to allow the site, empty because of serious leaks in the structure, to revert back to nature. But environmentalists and the outdoor public, well accustomed to and happy with the 150-year-old artificial

Spiro Agnew

Even trickier than Dicky

SPIRO AGNEW, who has died aged 77, was the only American vice-president forced out of office for criminal conduct. The irony of Spiro Agnew's disgrace was that, until his indictment for bribery, extortion, and tax evasion...

'Agnew's a tough, shrewd Greek. He can't give a speech worth a damn, but he's not going to fall apart'



Double trouble... Agnew with Nixon at the 1968 Republican convention. Agnew, the surprise running-mate, took bribes for most of his career

Democrats in total disarray after President Johnson's withdrawal and Robert Kennedy's assassination, Nixon was looking for a compatible running mate...

In April 1973, the White House learned that the US attorney in Baltimore was investigating payoffs, illegal campaign contributions, and tax evasion among a number of the vice-president's former associates...

Agnew said, "but honesty is a different thing to different people." In recent years, Agnew underwent a sort of rehabilitation. In May 1985, a white marble bust of the former vice-president was unveiled in the Capitol in Washington...

Nicholas Wahl

Outsider in France's inner circle

NICK WAHL, who has died aged 68, was a legendary, and rare, foreign insider in French politics. His parents were from Budapest but moved, after a brief time in Paris, to New York where he was born...



The General's men... Professor Wahl (left) with Jacques Chirac

in the political life of the three countries were invited - or rather, it seemed to me, summoned. For more than 30 years, Wahl and his friend Philip Williams of Nuffield (Gaiskill's biographer) would make one or two two-week interweaving raids together through the French political elite...

Republiques while Wahl never produced either the long-awaited major biography of Charles de Gaulle, nor any major book on French politics, only some short and elegant text-pieces and a good student textbook on the Fifth Republic, but textbook none the less.

Jackdaw



household is affected by thrush, which of the following treatments is used? Canesten or Diflucan? Barclays Bank would like to send information to your children about teenage bank accounts. Please sign below if you have no objections.

Richard Cook "Programming today is a race between software engineers striving to build bigger and better idiot-proof programs, and the Universe trying to produce bigger and better idiots. So far, the Universe is winning."

The age-old question of the universe elucidated for us. From the listserver, mish mash. Simple gibber HOW MANY readers of Anthony Burgess's novel A Clockwork Orange...

you on my motorbike, round and round, at very high speed! Surely not. And Bladderunner? Yes, I know that hunters of android "repliants" are called "bladder-runners" - but why? And yes, yes, William S. Burroughs (again) used the phrase in the title of a 1973 novel...

"Don't eat at places called Mama's." In a recent issue of this magazine, I forestall any attempts at exegesis ("Author, citing Dada's Erstwhile Esotericism, Opposes Present-Day Mamaist Obsessions"...) I confess that as a title it means nothing at all...

STATUS of Paul's Extra Refrigerator at Wed 18 11.30 1996 ● The refrigerator is 48 degrees Fahrenheit, 9 degrees Celsius ● The freezer compartment is 12 degrees Fahrenheit, -10 degrees Celsius ● The Diet Coke can is 41 degrees Fahrenheit, 5 degrees Celsius ● It is dark in here ● The door is closed

Question: How come the Diet Coke is frequently colder than the refrigerator? Answer: The refrigerator temperature is not uniform. It is below freezing up by the coils at the top of the compartment, and warm by the gap in the door seal where the wires enter the refrigerator. Tub status as of Wed September 18 11.33 1996

Emily Sheffield

FAQs SHOPPING - Does your dog regularly suffer from any of the following? Loose bowels, wind, skin irritation. How do you purchase your plants, bulbs, roses, shrubs and seeds? Which one cigar brand is smoked most often? Leisure - Do you belong to a golf club? If you ride, do you own a horse? Have you ever or do you currently play the following? Littlewoods Pools, Vernons Pools, National Lottery. Do you read romantic fiction? Health - If anyone in your

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Vertical advertisements on the right edge of the page, including "New Ford, ne", "Morg", "Olivetti s", "shake-ou", "Call 0990 20 20", and "Morgan".

Management ready to back investment at Halewood on condition outside suppliers take over parts production



Price of a new Ford Escort: dole for 1,000

Chris Barrie Business Correspondent

UP TO 1,000 jobs are to be axed at Ford's Halewood car plant on Merseyside as the price of investment to build the next version of the Escort...

Talking of the creation of a 'wrap-around factory', one executive said: 'The multiplier effect in terms of jobs could be huge. Similar plans for an industrial park are being considered for Dagenham'

thought to favour the plan as a means of securing the plant's long-term future...

The unions will also seek a guarantee that there will be no compulsory redundancies and expect the outsourcing to be phased in rather than introduced abruptly...

In the 1980s Halewood suffered from a reputation for poor quality and productivity. Faced with closure threats, local management and the workforce have worked hard to improve competitiveness...



The way it was... Corsairs roll off the production line in the 1960s (left) but Halewood has also frequently been the site of industrial dispute as shown by dissenting workers leaving a mass meeting above

commitment to Halewood has not been given.

Outsourcing of the type planned for Halewood is already in place at Saarlouis and Valencia. By using outside suppliers to make and assemble sub-assemblies...

used by Japanese car manufacturers.

Local inward investment agencies are thought to have prepared marketing plans and aid packages to persuade component companies to set up on Merseyside...

told suppliers that they must be ready to move to a highly competitive marketplace.

Mr Ayling did not expect wholesale job changes and looked forward to employing new recruits, skilled in customer service and languages. A 'strategy of investment and improved profitability' meant that 'some jobs will go, some will be outsourced and some will be relocated'...

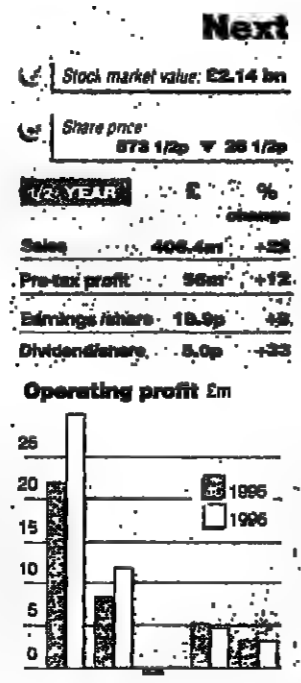
Halewood's cars will be sold.

This year the factory has suffered bouts of downtime due to slack demand. If the new car were forecast to sell more strongly, then Halewood would be more economic to run...

Market worries over what's in store for Next

Outlook/ Shares fall despite retailer's progress, writes Pauline Springett

NEXT'S profits were slightly above expectations. Nevertheless the shares fell, thanks to a combination of factors. Analysts were disappointed with the rise in sales compared to last year and there had been widespread anticipation that the company might pull out a spectacular set of results...



Which is not to say that Next has underperformed. Yesterday's half-year results showed that the fashion chain is chugging along nicely. The big question mark is over its future — where does the real growth come from, given that it operates in a highly competitive UK market and its overseas operations have yet to set the world alight?

Yesterday's results showed that the sales and profits of all Next's main activities have increased over the past six months. The company also seems to have a knack of positioning itself well within the competitive marketplace of high street women's fashion wear...

Next interiors is also enjoying a mini boom thanks to the interest in home decorating

BA to shed 5,000 jobs to hone competitive edge

Check-in could be sold off — but 'a lot of money' will cushion blow

Keith Harper Transport Editor

BRITISH Airways was last night preparing to contract out engineering, baggage handling and check-in work in a 'second transformation' which will mean 5,000 job cuts in the next 18 months.

BA chief executive Bob Ayling said he hoped that most of the job losses will be achieved by early retirement or by staff leaving voluntarily. To soften the blow, BA will offer 'a lot of money' to those who want to go, but cannot take out compulsory redundancies.

Most of the jobs will disappear at BA's largest employment centres at Gatwick and Heathrow — in engineering, refuelling, baggage handling and check-in which could be sold off to outside firms. But it will concede to recruit certain staff and expects that within three years that its numbers will be back to 55,000, the total employed at present.

Mr Ayling's announcement is part of the 'Step Change' strategy which he has adopted since taking over in January. After achieving record profits of £585 million, he made it clear that BA had to make £1 billion worth of savings over the next three years. If the proposed alliance with American Airlines is approved, it is likely to lead to extra jobs.

The unions, who were not officially informed of the job losses until last night, expressed 'deep concern'. Sean Keating, national officer of the GMB general union, said it would press BA to make sure that the redundancies were voluntary.

'BA is an extremely profitable and successful company, and we will do our best to see that change is by consent.' Mr Keating ruled out strike action at this stage.



Facing greater market challenges... Bob Ayling

Mr Ayling, however, believes that BA still bears some of the trappings of the nationalised industry it was up to 10 years ago, and that it is not as efficient or as competitive as it should be.

He said yesterday that while it had nourished as a private company, it had to face up to greater challenges from the market. 'Our customers expect more, but our cost of providing a seat has

risen faster than the price customers pay in a highly competitive marketplace.'

Mr Ayling did not expect wholesale job changes and looked forward to employing new recruits, skilled in customer service and languages. A 'strategy of investment and improved profitability' meant that 'some jobs will go, some will be outsourced and some will be relocated'...

In some cases, employees may be redeployed, restrained or offered jobs with new contractors.

Areas for efficiency savings have been identified. British Airways Engineering has been restructured as a separate business and the company has not ruled out allowing outside investors to take stakes in it.

BA said it will work with employees to ensure that cargo handling and passenger revenue accounting are carried out at external market prices.

Fast train to Gatwick may ease Heathrow snarl-ups

PLANS to open a 75-minute rail link between Heathrow and Gatwick are to be submitted to the Terminal 5 Inquiry by BAA as part of the airport operator's aim to shift 50 per cent of Heathrow's passengers on to public transport, writes Keith Harper.

The route, via central London, will be made possible by the £350 million Heathrow Express line to Paddington due for completion within two years. It is one of six options BAA is considering with the private sector to make further use of the line and its 16 minute journey time.

The other plans are for a train-an-hour service from Manchester and Birmingham, which would mean building a spur off the West Coast main line, and a regular link to the south-west of Heathrow, bringing the prospect of direct services from Reading and Waterloo.

Michael Meine, BAA's technical director, said yesterday: 'Given our huge spending on airport infrastructure, we are doing everything possible to encourage public transport into Heathrow. This will not only benefit travellers to the airport, but also London and the South-east.'

Railtrack is working with BAA and potential operators on track improvements. This would require private capital and a more progressive attitude to investment than has been shown in the industry in recent years.

BAA also announced that motorists at Heathrow are to face an extra 25p charge for not using public transport. The £1.25 million a year expected to be raised will be spent on improving rail, coach and bus connections.

The new parking fee will affect the airport's 18,000 parking spaces for visitors, while private owners of another 10,000 spaces are also likely to be asked to join the scheme. Motorists already pay between £13.80 and £30 a day.

Underside

Dan Atkinson

SOCIALIST peer Lord Hollick — boss of, inter alia, the Express newspaper group — made some colleagues here feel deeply unloved last Friday when he launched a quarter-hour telephone rant suggesting our coverage of his results the previous day failed to achieve the high standards of accuracy long associated with the Express titles. We need not have fretted. Doyen of the media writers, the Financial Times's Ray Snoddy, was treated to a similar barrage. Meanwhile, we hear, Lord Hollick's 'partner', United's chairman Lord Stevens, continues to be 'consulted'. Pip pip, old boy.

THE Chancellor was guest of honour at the 10th birthday on Monday of London Economics, the forecasting outfit that boasts former Downing Street personage Sarah Hogg among its brainboxes.

Three Pints entertained the boffins with a jolly tour d'honneur of anniversaries and birthdays in general. Strangely enough, given he was speaking on September 16, there was one birthday he failed to mention: the fourth anniversary of White Wednesday. Must have slipped his mind.

COVENT Garden PR man Victor Trocki's best-known client — two-year-old 'race' horse Easycall — redeemed himself after his three-legged



performance at York in August with a 5-1 win at Doncaster on Saturday. Victor ('if it moves, publicise it') had little time to count his winnings, however. Tuesday night saw him masterminding the opening of Le Bidule in Chalk Farm, an eatery specialising in French/South American food. Given that France's only known footing in Latin America is French Guyana, the ace rice colony attached, perhaps Le Bidule ought to be renamed Cuisine Ariane.

And then on to Victor's next client, a doorknob. Or rather, the 'state of the art door decor' produced by ironmonger Charles Collinge: 'you can't just call them doorknobs' enthuses the ultimate PR man. No, quite. Don't ever change.

BACK to birthdays: next Wednesday marks Year 10 of the Great Capitalist Revolution — Big Bang, or, at least, it does for the Stock Exchange. The codgers among us may remember that deontological stockbroker actually occurred on October

27 1986, but the re-writing of history has been market-driven, apparently. Next week was the only 'window' (ugh!) available for use of the lamented pre-Bang trading floor. Life, the stripey-blazer derivatives operation, will have taken charge by the time of the real Geburststag.

WHO'D have thought Lord Sterling was a modern romance? The first lord of shipping is showing himself remarkably flexible in his attachments. Only a week or so ago, Sterling was crediting the decision to merge his container shipping operations with those of Nedlloyd to a 'cultural compatibility'; to the fact he could share a pint and a discussion of music with his opposite number at the Dutch shipping line. Into bed at one minute. But then swiftly out the other side when his partner became an encumbrance. So much for sharing a pint at North Sea Ferries, where Sterling has just decided that a 50/50 venture is no longer tenable and he must have sole control.

News in brief

Losses pile up at British Biotech

INCREASED losses of £9 million were yesterday unveiled by British Biotech, the pharmaceuticals concern, for the three months to the end of July. The company maintained that the losses were within budget. The company maintained that progress on two drugs during the quarter was very significant, with further news on the compounds expected in two months. Lexiprant, a drug to treat acute pancreatitis, the firm's first treatment, is set to be launched early next year. Peak turnover of £300 million a year is being forecast for the drug.

British Biotech was one of several such outfits to float this year. Investors were taken by surprise in July when the firm made a £143 million cash call.

British Biotech was one of several such outfits to float this year. Investors were taken by surprise in July when the firm made a £143 million cash call.

Should the takeover succeed, it would result in a company with 3,750 funeral homes and 600 cemeteries, consolidating the two largest players in the funeral parlour industry, it would come under antitrust scrutiny. — Mark Tran in New York

Vertical advertisements on the right edge of the page, including 'sleepy bookie', 'H', 'runner', and '101 102 103'.

Racing

Sleepytime has bookies at odds

Chris Hawkins
HENRY CECIL struck back into the hearts of the bookmakers when sending out Sleepytime to make an impressive winning debut in yesterday's Grass Widows Maiden Stakes at Sandown.

he dismounted. "They couldn't go fast enough for her." Cecil was clearly deeply impressed and this prompted one of his more playful moods afterwards.

or the Rockfed Stakes at Newmarket, but Cecil has plenty to choose from with Reams of Verse and Fleet River also high in his happy order.



Fast filly... Pat Eddery and Sleepytime are led into the winner's enclosure after their smooth success at Sandown yesterday

Cheltenham put on Irish Craic

CHELTEMHAM have rechristened their November meeting the Murphy's Irish Craic to mark the renaming of the Mackeson Gold Cup as the Murphy's Gold Cup.

ners over the three days with Murphy's paying a travel allowance of £750 for every Irish horse which runs in one of the eight Whitbread-sponsored events.

This is the other end of the spectrum. For every prospering Celtic there are 20 trainers struggling to make ends meet.

Ayr runners and riders with TV form

Table listing Ayr runners and riders with TV form, including race numbers, horse names, and rider names.

Channel 4

Table listing Channel 4 race results, including race numbers, horse names, and rider names.

Lingfield

Table listing Lingfield race results, including race numbers, horse names, and rider names.

Rugby League

Betts puts his experience behind Farrell

Paul Fitzpatrick finds the GB vice-captain in positive mood for the Pacific tour

"We did not get off to the best of starts," recalls Betts. "We were beaten by Papua New Guinea in the first Test and that defeat could have had two effects. It could have dragged us down or dragged us closer together."

DENIS BETTS does not attempt to disguise his disappointment at missing out on the Great Britain captaincy for the tour of Papua New Guinea, Fiji and New Zealand which starts next week.

"It dragged us closer together and we went on to win a Test series in New Zealand which nobody gave us a hope in hell of winning."

As Farrell's vice-captain, the 27-year-old Betts, now with Auckland Warriors after an outstanding career at Wigan, is in a position to give his young skipper invaluable insight into the problems the team can expect in Papua New Guinea and New Zealand in particular.

For Frank Endacott, the New Zealand coach whom Betts knows well from his Auckland connection, this tour is the highlight of his career. It is something he has worked steadfastly towards, says Betts, and he is desperate to see the Kiwis win their first series against Great Britain since 1984.

Results

Table listing racing results for Beverley, Sandown, and Yarmouth, including race numbers, horse names, and rider names.

Channel 4

Table listing Channel 4 race results, including race numbers, horse names, and rider names.

Channel 4

Table listing Channel 4 race results, including race numbers, horse names, and rider names.

Yarmouth

Table listing Yarmouth race results, including race numbers, horse names, and rider names.

RACELINE logo and contact information for Ayr, Lingfield, and Yarmouth.

Michael Roberts, the 42-year-old former champion jockey, returned from a seven-week lay-off with a fractured left wrist by winning yesterday's Golden Jubilee Challenge Handicap at Yarmouth on Secret Aly.

COCA-COLA CUP



Full stretch... Andy Gray of Leeds challenges as Mark Barnard clears for Darlington at Elland Road last night

PHOTOGRAPH: FOSS KENNARD

Coventry City 1 Birmingham City 1

Late Daish dash saves Sky Blues

THE Old Pals' Act retained its healthy constitution last night as Trevor Francis's Birmingham City and Ron Atkinson's 13 million misfit shared the honours in a curiously muted West Midlands derby.

A deflected shot from the Coventry old boy Paul Furlong in the 36th minute gave the mid-table First Division side the lead they scarcely deserved before Liam Daish, a former Birmingham player, equalised 10 minutes from time.

Atkinson it was who rescued Francis's career when he took him on as a player at Sheffield Wednesday after he was sacked as manager of Queens Park Rangers. As is the way of life in the Premier-ship, Atkinson was soon out of the door to be succeeded as Wednesday manager by Francis.

Salako almost put Coventry ahead in the third minute. Dublin freed Whelan down the right and from the byline he turned the ball back inside to Telfer. The winger's crisp cross was met by the head of Salako and Bennett reacted instantly, tipping the ball over the bar.

Barnet 1, West Ham United 1

Cottee spares Hammers' blushes

Martin Thorpe

A LITTLE man who has rescued West Ham on many important occasions did it again last night. With only 12 minutes left Tony Cottee rose to head home a Lazaridis cross to spare his team's blushes in a game they were about to lose.

Despite all their international signings West Ham had a domestic look. Futre and Raducioiu were both injured and Dumitrescu on international duty. Certainly the Third Division club found nothing foreign about this standard

of opposition, producing some wonderful flowing moves, belying their position seventh from bottom of the Football League.

An early warning came for West Ham when the Barnet full-back Gale fired in a 30-yard shot from the left which Dicks was relieved to clear for a corner.

Mautone was making his debut having been recalled from a loan period with Crewe after an injury to Milkosko. Redknapp had been toying with bringing in the No 3 keeper Peter Shilton on his 47th birthday.

The Danish virtuoso had to miss this game because of a hip injury and his absence was always going to reduce the Ibrox side's effectiveness. Nobody else can do what Laudrup does, so there had to be tactical compensation.

Dowie's headed centre. Despite the lack of the aforementioned foreigners Redknapp introduced a fourth overseas player into his side for the second half, bringing on Lazaridis to try and increase the threat down the left-hand side.

It almost brought immediate dividends. After just three minutes of the new half a mistake by McDonald let in Lazaridis on goal but his shot was well saved by the keeper.

over the bar. West Ham was showing much more urgency now, no doubt stirred by a few well-chosen words from the manager during the break. Hughes shot just wide, as did Cottee from close range.

However, Barnet still showed they were dangerous. Wilson produced a threatening shot from 20 yards, saved by the keeper, and Devine, put through by Wilson, shot straight at the keeper when he should have done better.

Scottish Coca-Cola Cup, fourth round: Rangers 4, Hibernian 0

Gascoigne the lightning before the storm

Patrick Glenn

RANGERS' untroubled stroll into the semi-finals was assured long before Peter van Vossen scored his own second and Rangers' third with a low, left-foot drive from four yards 10 minutes from time and Jorg Albertz got the fourth two minutes from the end with a ferocious 30-yard free-kick.

storm, rather than a sudden squall. Spectators can see it coming and sense that damage may be done, but full momentum takes some while to be reached.

As one Englishman celebrated, another just looked 40. Ray Wilkins, on his return to Ibrox as a Hibs player, showed only the remnants of a once glowing talent.

Wilkins did have a creditable effort from 20 yards, slugging the ball against the goalkeeper's leg. The Dutchman had earlier beaten the goalkeeper with a looping header, but Miller rushed back to head off the line.

By then, those early rumblings on the horizon had become a whirlwind. Rangers' Gerrard, Moore, Gough, Parrie, Bjorlund, Vossen, Gascoigne, McGill, Albertz, Davis, McCann, Milne, Walsh, Dow, McGinlay, D Jackson, Hughes, Barry, Cossie, Dowie, Referred to K. Ryrie, Leeds.

Celtic bonus row erupts

LEAKED reports that Celtic players are in dispute with their chairman Fergus McCann about win bonuses have been confirmed by the manager Tommy Burns. "This is something which will be settled internally and settled today," he said.

Table with 2 columns: Results, Soccer. Includes COCA-COLA CUP, Premier Division, and various league fixtures.

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Second round, first leg Blackpool 1, Chelsea 4

Committed Chelsea ride early shock

Michael Walker

CHELSEA may be renowned for their sophistication but the west Londoners brought the rather more traditional values of concentration and commitment to one of the heritage sites of English football last night.

Instead of testating, though, Chelsea responded impressively and were level 15 minutes later. Vialli may have been missing with an ankle injury but Chelsea still carried a significant threat going forward in the 17-year-old Morris.

Swindon 1, Queens Park Rangers 2

Houston makes a winning start

David Foot

IF Stewart Houston had any misgivings about burning his seat in the dug-out when he swapped his seat at Elland Road, they were instantly forgotten as he jumped from his seat in the dug-out to extol the saving grace of QPR's brilliant, overdue late flurry that brought them two goals in two minutes.

Houston and convince him there was no need for immediate replacements. There was nothing to reassure about the way the defence dealt with Horlock's cross. The debutant Graham got an uneasy deflection and Sommer had to change direction to punch away.

Expanded Far East World Cup dismissed as far-fetched

FIFA, the game's world governing body, yesterday dismissed as wishful thinking reports that the 2002 World Cup finals, which are to be jointly hosted by Japan and South Korea, would see an increase in participating countries from 32 to 40.

Vertical advertisement on the right edge with text 'The Guardian', 'Soccer', 'Kinkiadze', 'exit to let in Bassett', 'M.', 'Hernia poser for Anderton', 'Cricket', 'Guardian'.

مركزان التحويل

Soccer

Kinkladze exit to let in Bassett

Ian Ross

MANCHESTER CITY are ready to sell their most prized asset, Georgian Kinkladze, and remove the last obstacle to Dave Bassett becoming the new Maine Road manager.

It is understood that Bassett will leave Crystal Palace and be installed at City in the next 48 hours. The appointment was expected early this week but Bassett is thought to have been concerned about the quality of City's senior squad and the lack of funds to rebuild it.

Parsons, after 19 first-class seasons and a disparaging benefit, has heard so many stories about his age that he has been known to pin his birth certificate on the dressing-room wall to press for a new contract.

Mullally, the putative musician, became the only Leicestershire player to break into the England side this summer but even his Australian upbringing engenders a certain resentment from those who believe the way to salvation is never to stray over a national boundary.

Cricket

Three men in a boat that may shortly come in

David Hopps looks at Leicestershire's bowling mainstays who have set the pace all season and left the rest in their wake

ONE of the three mainstays who have made a penny. Another began his working life in the mines and has always thirsted for a decent pint. The most spaced out of the three is the most fashionable of teams to the County Championship.

The champions-elect have been routinely depicted as a commonplace side prospering in an unexceptional year and victory in their final match against Middlesex will not overy disturb the judgment.

How they stand... and the countdown on the finale

County Table table with columns: County, W, L, D, T, R, Pts. Includes Leicestershire, Surrey, Kent, Essex, etc.

LEICESTERSHIRE will not consider the possibility for a minute but a draw and maximum bonus points (eight) from their final match of the season against Middlesex would be enough to bring them their second championship, writes David Hopps.

The three-point incentive for a draw, introduced this season to dissuade counties from surrendering lost causes, plus bonus points

Sport in brief

Ambitious Andrew buys a Bentley

JOHN BENTLEY, the former Sale centre who won three England caps eight years ago, is the latest player to return to rugby union after a spell in league.

Powell to coach the Cougars

DARYL POWELL, Keighley Cougars' 31-year-old international back, was confirmed yesterday as club coach.

Dry run for Robertson

NATHAN ROBERTSON, seen drinking at last weekend's Friends Provident British Grand Slam tournament in Perth, has been dropped from the England badminton squad for next month's World Grand Prix tournaments in Holland and Russia.

Kent let former captain go

KENT are releasing their former captain Mark Benson and erstwhile England fast bowler Alan Iqbal. Both have a year remaining on their contracts but have not played in the first team this season because of injury.

Breakaway win for Di Renzo

MARCO DI RENZO, an Italian cyclist in his first year as a professional, scored his first big win when he took yesterday's windy 123-mile 11th stage of the Tour of Spain from Avila to Salamanca.

England unbeaten in chess

ENGLAND, the second seeds, have started well at the 127-nation Chess Olympiad in Erevan, writes Leonard Barden.

Speedway roar dies away

SEVENTY years of racing at Middlesbrough comes to an end after tonight's Premier League match against Bradford.

Solheim no place for Dottie behaviour

David Davies on the breach of etiquette that soured the last meeting between the women professionals of the US and Europe

TWO YEARS ago, in the heat of the battle for the Solheim Cup at The Greenbrier, West Virginia, an incident occurred that was in itself disgraceful, that brought discredit to its perpetrator and that came close to diminishing the competition itself.

Cricket

Montgomery banks on winning at bonny Loch Lomond by being level-headed

COLIN MONTGOMERIE has shot more sub-par rounds of golf than most but believes level par could win the inaugural Loch Lomond World Invitational over the next four days.

Heves plays his best golf in the best conditions and is anxious to make amends for his joint 25th place in the Trophée Lacombe last week.

Montgomery is equally determined. "I finished second in the Lacombe but I did not play well in the last 13 holes," he said. "I

Cricket

Three men in a boat that may shortly come in

When it does not, we feel justified in questioning whether 17 four-day games are excessive and favour powers of survival above excellence. Even Illingworth, as a former Leicestershire man, has not been immune.

Birkenshaw and his captain James Whitaker have again left Leicestershire cricket in Yorkshire's debt, although the coach has assembled more than half his side from other counties' cast-offs and insists he would draw more pleasure from

Similar conditions may also be in place at The Oval where Surrey take on Worcestershire, but Kent have no control over the nature of the Bristol pitch on which they face Gloucestershire.

Surrey are 14 points behind the leaders and Kent a further point adrift. With 16 points available for a win, bonus points could yet tip the balance. Four batting points are available in

Other bowlers, too, have made major contributions to Leicestershire's season, notably Vince Wells, an opening batsman and outswing bowler, who rotated for years in Kent's 2nd XI and who post-30 is having the season of his life, and the West Indian Phil Simmons, who is riding high in the first-class bowling averages. Between them, on a Grace Road pitch that will doubtless do them a few favours, they aim to please.



In the championship fast lane... Alan Mullally, left, David Millns and Gordon Parsons



their success than his own part in Leicestershire's 1975 championship-winning side. The collective effort has not wavered all summer.

"Gordon's a good, grumbling old pro and probably our most disciplined bowler," Birkenshaw said. "When he walks off the field he always knows his figures, even if he has had 180 knocked off him. He is calmer than he was but he is still likely to blow at any moment."

We were on the Chester-le-Street balcony, watching "Bullhead" finish an unreminded spell against Durham. Frustrated by his failures, he finished with a succession of

bouncers and then kicked his bowling marker in the direction of Durham. Before play began, each Leicestershire player had provided a caption to a cartoon illustrating the trouble they enter every time they take a wicket.

Parsons's caption read: "Even The Team Huddle Is Uphill Into The Wind."

Birkenshaw believes that Millns is bowling as well now as in the early Nineties when England honours looked certain. "He's had a few knock-backs but he worked hard on his game in South Africa last winter and he is a true, aggressive fast bowler, an old-fashioned type with his

shoulders and backside. He doesn't get wickets with his mouth but he tanks down the hill at Grace Road, never shirks and has a pint or two afterwards.

"Mullally?" one inquires. "Speciman?" generally comes the answer. But Birkenshaw detects a change. "He appears more spaced out than he is because he generally has his walkman on or is yelling over the top of his guitar. He used to turf up in old jeans and a baseball cap, turned back to front, but he is gradually coming to the party."

"J.J. [James Whitaker] has let him set his own fields and give him the responsibility to become his own man and that has suited him. That spider bite seemed to do him good. We might have to send him back for a while."



Fairway to go... Europe's Trish Johnson drives off the 5th tee during practice for the Solheim Cup which starts tomorrow at St Pierre

Solheim no place for Dottie behaviour

David Davies on the breach of etiquette that soured the last meeting between the women professionals of the US and Europe

It makes her an opponent who is not only difficult to beat but also unpleasant to play against, and her behaviour two years ago was indicative of that.

It is important to remember exactly what happened then and in the immediate aftermath. Pepper was playing in a four-ball match and one of her opponents was Laura Davies.

The match was won by the Americans and afterwards Pepper was brought into the press room to talk about it. She was asked about the incident and the exchanges were recorded by a stenographer as follows:



Pepper... best and worst

Question: "At the 3rd hole, when Laura missed that birdie putt, you gave a 'pump' and said 'yes', as I recall. She looked like she was a little upset. Did you talk to her about it?"

Pepper: "Talk to who about what?"

Question: "Should she [Davies] have been upset with you for doing that when she missed?"

Pepper: "I don't think anybody would have done anything different."

That passage is remarkable in that it indicates that Pepper believes that to shout "Yeah" when an opponent misses a putt is acceptable and that there was nothing whatever to apologise about.

The incident was so far outside the bounds of normal etiquette that in the intervening two years some good golfing people have decided that it cannot possibly have been as bad as all that, that the media are, as ever, hyping it up again.

the European non-playing captain, made that suggestion while admitting that she had not been present at the time in question. Walker was prepared to dismiss Pepper's shenanigans with the remark: "She shows her emotions in the way that she shows them. You've got to get on with your game and ignore how others behave."

Likewise the American magazine Golfweek has an article about Pepper which, unbelievably, talks about the player's "fiery competitiveness" in the Solheim Cup but never mentions what she actually did at The Greenbrier.

The piece also talks in snide terms about the Europeans "taking umbrage at the whole display" without saying what that display was and it adds a comment from an unnamed NBC TV official: "I think it's easier to take umbrage when you're getting beat up."

They are, in other words, endorsing reprehensible behaviour as being acceptable as long as you win. "She is the embodiment of the spirit of the Solheim Cup," says this piece.

She is not. She is the exact opposite.

Yesterday Mickey Walker,

Cricket

News and Scores

0891 22 88 +

Counties update table with columns: County, W, L, D, T, R, Pts. Includes Derbyshire, Durham, Essex, etc.

Complete county scores

The Guardian INTERACTIVE

iston makes inning start

ided Far East World essed as far-fetched

SportsGuardian

England rift with clubs widens

Robert Armstrong

A FRESH outbreak of acrimony between the Rugby Football Union and its leading clubs yesterday threatened this autumn's internationals at Twickenham.

Peace talks between the RFU and the clubs were undermined by more mud-slinging by the two sides which led Twickenham to accuse Donald Kerr, the chairman of the clubs' umbrella body English Professional Rugby Union Clubs Limited, of "a deliberate attempt to split the RFU and conceal differences of opinion with Epruc". Kerr, in turn, berated the chairman of the RFU executive Cliff Brittle for allegedly "undermining the peace process".

Now negotiations between England and Australia, who want to play a Test at Twickenham on either November 2 or 16, have also stalled due to the uncertainty surrounding the future of the England squad which has not met so far this season because of the dispute. England are due to play home games against Italy on November 23 and Argentina on December 14.

Meanwhile a growing number of clubs, including Orrell, Sale, Gloucester, London Irish, Leicester, Waterloo, Wakefield and West Hartlepool plan to hold meetings to consider Epruc's threat to break away from the RFU on October 11.

Many members and officials have been alarmed by the way the England squad's preparations have been derailed by what they regard as a handful of businessmen who have invested in the clubs within the past year. Yesterday Kerr refused to give an assurance that the England players could train next Wednesday.

The clubs' latest attempt to use the England squad as a negotiating weapon against Twickenham produced an angry joint response from

Brittle and the RFU secretary Tony Hallett, whose tersely worded statement indicated a closing of the ranks. Their concern about the continued disruption to England's training plans prompted them to call on Epruc to "release their players to play for England at the very least to show good will".

The first meeting at Twickenham between England and Australia for five years — which would be worth around \$4 million to both nations — has been placed in jeopardy because the RFU cannot guarantee a recognisable England team at relatively short notice.

If the fixture is aborted the clubs and the players would suffer as much as the RFU given that all are desperate to enhance the revenue required to fund the professional game. "Surely there is no reason for anyone to knock us back this time," said John O'Neill, the Australian RFU chief executive yesterday.

According to Kerr: "We were fairly relaxed about the players attending England training but we now find it too early to comment on whether we will release them. Unfortunately Cliff Brittle... has been active behind the scenes in undermining the whole peace process."

"The RFU gave us certain undertakings and in return we agreed to release the players to try to take things forward on an amicable basis. We looked for an amicable parting of the ways on October 11 but it looks like being acrimonious rather than friendly."

It also remains to be seen whether the RFU will retain authority over the European Cup and Anglo-Welsh Cup now that the English, Welsh and Scottish clubs have agreed to form a European Rugby Federation, an umbrella organisation for all club competitions.

ITV is expected to decide in the next week whether or not to televise the European Cup, due to start on October 12.

CUP SOCCER



Collision course... Birmingham's striker Paul Furlong, right, and Coventry's defender Richard Shaw challenge for midfield possession in the all-Midlands tie at Highfield Road last night

Raise a glass to the rout of moralists



Frank Keating

THE decent family compassion and support pledged by both Arsenal and the Football Association to the drug-taking Paul Merson and the drinker Tony Adams shines out in comparison to the wretched reaction of Sussex CCC and the Test and County Cricket Board and their heavy-handed treatment of Ed Giddins, the promising England A pace bowler.

Just as he did at Merson's public *maeculpa*, the FA's director of public affairs David Davies this week announced: "Tony Adams can be assured of our total support." That in the month after a draconian Lord's banned Giddins from all cricket and, more than likely, wiped out his whole future career.

The fact that Merson and Adams seemed to use the tabloid press as a confessional somehow gives even more credit to the FA's reaction. But what business is it of Lord's what a cricketer does in his own time at a party? The police exist as the country's law enforcers. If a drug is performance-enhancing, agreed, a different matter — but if Giddins had opened the bowling when still "high" he would probably have broken the world record for wickets in an unfinished over.

It would be too much to hope that Sussex and the TCCB were having second thoughts about Giddins because, as the 20th century winds down, both seem happy to represent the sport's administrative mandarins who hanker for the 19th. The whole batty ethos they cling to was defined 132 years ago, in the Royal Commission on Public Schools in 1854: "... the cricket and football fields are not merely places of exercise and amusement; they help to form some of the most valuable social qualities and many virtues."

Rowlocks! In professional team sports of the 1990s you can be both unsociable and unmanly but, if your performance on the field is better than that of the bloke challenging for your place, you stay in the team. And, as long as you perform on the field, what do you do at off-duty parties should not make a halfp'orth of difference.

Why do this Gestapo of morals inhabit only British sport? Do they test for drugs or alcohol at the entrance to the BBC each morning? Or Fleet Street? Or at the stage-door of the RSC? At the Institute of Directors, perhaps? Or at the House of Commons? Attend a party at the latter and you may go in thinking you have a drink problem but, once in, you know you are as abstemious as Baden-Powell.

Adams' courage should be applauded. Another confessed alcoholic (who has not had a drink for years) was the penalty-area maestro Jimmy Greaves, who once graphically explained the stress that Adams attempted to voice. "While with Spurs I drank heavily to help relieve the pressure of big-time football. My career covered an era when the game suddenly went sick and defeat became a dirty word. We used to get really stoked up for the games, with our adrenalin pumped so high a lot of us needed an after-match drink to bring us back to earth."

I T WAS 1981 that Greaves was reflecting in sobriety on his career — the same year Ian Botham indelibly signed his name with such honour on the Ashes urn. (It was five years before Lord's, lamentably, was to ban Botham for half a summer for admitting to having puffed a bit of pot in his youth).

On the eve of Botham's cataclysmic innings at the Headingley Test — on the Sunday of rest with England already looking beaten — he threw a party at his Yorkshire home, a party of epic and limited splendour. It ended with the host the last man standing. He could not have had a hangover for 149 not out followed when he batted next day. Nor at In-dore the following winter when he hit 118 in 44 balls on another morning after a truly Rababian night before.

Botham's suspicious boozymanship, inspired by the grape and grain, at Headingley was a Test innings of joy matched only by Gilbert Jessop's at The Oval in 1902. He, too, had been at the juice the night before, as he admitted in his memoir *A Cricketer's Log*: "As the night wore on, I found myself gambling on the proceedings of the morrow. It was done to assist in the laudable object of raising drooping spirits — and also to the fact that my first glass of Pommery that evening had produced that feeling which for want of a better word may be described as 'more-ish'."

More-ish — to the extent of killing his third bottle, before going out to slay the dragon on the field. If only today's prurient moralists could be routed with such ready ease.

Singular new club with testy members who want to leave

Paul Weaver

WHEN members of the One Test Wonders Club gathered at Merchants Restaurant in Southampton on Tuesday evening, it might have been for a sulk-in, a communal bitch on the fickle nature of England's Test selectors. Instead they had a few beers and launched their club.

To play cricket for England is an honour and to play once, according to Hampshire's captain John Stephenson, is a singular honour. The club is his brainchild although he recruited his wife Fiona to do the Wisden slog and count the members. "There are over 80 cricketers who have played just once for England and 19 of them are still living," said Stephenson, who qualifies by way of his solitary cap against Australia at The Oval in 1989. They might have called the club the Old Oval-Timers because that is where many of them made their first and last appearances.

"It is the only club I can think of which everyone wants to belong to but, as soon as they do, they want to lose their membership. I would certainly be happy to relinquish my card."

"A common strain among members seems to be that we were chosen to play at the end of a series and then were not chosen to play in a subsequent tour." Strangely they have selected as their president a man who has won more England caps, 118, than anyone else: Graham Gooch. He was there on Tuesday night and was lucky they did not put a match to his droopy moustache. "It was a great turn-out and Norman Mitchell-Innes, who is 82 now and played for Oxford University and Somerset, nipped along, although Hopper Read, who played for Surrey and Essex and is now 86, couldn't make it," said Stephenson. "There were a few one-cap wonders of a more recent vintage, including Alan Butcher, Tony Pigott, Paul Parker, Dick Richardson and Arnie Sidebottom."

The One Testers have designed their own club tie: blue silk with an England emblem and one cap hanging from it. "The idea," said Stephenson, "is to get together, raise a bit of money for charity and have a bit of fun in the process."

Other members include James Whitaker (1989), Alan Wells (1988), Joey Benjamin (1994), Mark Benson (1986), Andy Lloyd (1984), Ken Palmer (1964) and Dennis Brookes (1947).

Guardian Crossword No 20,762

Set by Janus

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32

- Across**
- 1 Ineffective prescription for economy (7)
 - 5 Yield to professional dictator (7)
 - 10 Many find support over hunt (4)
 - 11 Award for celebrity on continent (6,4)
 - 12 Jacket material for one out of three boatmen (6)
 - 13 Produce off-putting green tea (8)
 - 14 Was Cato saved by their pleadings? (9)
 - 16 They ruled over some rebellious Rastafarians (5)
 - 17 Felt badly about English ships (5)
 - 19 Displeasing kind of attack (9)
 - 23 Gift from party to state (8)

- Down**
- 2 Servant who must set out with drawback (7)
 - 3 Deceased king in aftertime (8)
 - 4 Where to see a bird on the ocean (7)
 - 6 Soldier is unable to retract (6)
 - 7 Has little confidence in underworld business arrangements (9)
 - 8 Formal document showing singer to possess skill (7)

Crossword Solution 20,762

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32

- 9 Report may follow excessive pressure by this member (7,6)
- 15 Labourer that is overcap perhaps (9)
- 18 Sentry's warning (7)
- 20 Cuts out taxes (7)
- 21 Barbilone boy put in meat (7)
- 22 Crushing defeat over bird (8)
- 25 In Wigan — or that direction (5)

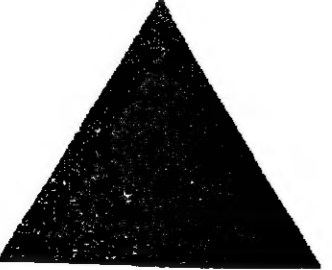
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